

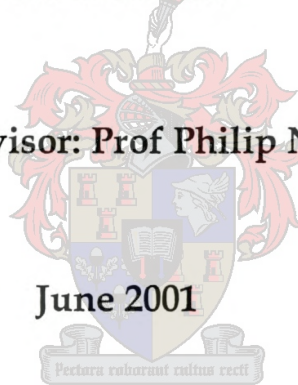
South Africa and the reform of the United Nations Security Council

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it to any other university for a degree.

Abstract

After being sidelined for a number of years, South Africa finds itself readmitted to the international community. One of the many issues at stake now is the reform of the United Nations Security Council. This study looks at South Africa's aim to make substantial changes in the international system, with the Security Council being one of the target institutions. This is a mammoth task for South Africa and the study points out the challenges that go with engaging in this process.

The study points out an element of ambiguity in South Africa's foreign policy and the challenges that go with making multilateralism a cornerstone of such a policy. While it is not yet clear as to whether South Africa will succeed in changing the behaviour of states and the practice of multilateral institutions, it is at the moment participating in debates that might lead to such changes. South Africa's participation in the Open Ended Working Committee on the reform of the United Nations Security Council constitutes one move among others to ensure a change in the practice of the Security Council.

The limits of making multilateralism a cornerstone of foreign policy are outlined with the aim of making policy-makers aware of the implications of the broad scope of their ambiguous foreign policy. While it is necessary to avoid engaging in assignments that might be difficult to manage, the need for South Africa to focus only on what is achievable and not to try and punch above its weight is one aspect this paper emphasises. The paper ends by making recommendations, which include (among others) that South Africa should attempt to secure a seat in the reformed Security Council should such an opportunity arise, but only after a careful consideration of her abilities.

Opsomming

Na jare van politieke isolasie is Suid-Afrika weer 'n volwaardige lid van die internasionale gemeenskap. Die hervorming van die Verenigde Nasies (VN) se Veiligheidsraad, het binne die konteks van buitelandse beleid, een van die land se vernaamste uitdagings geword. Hierdie studie plaas Suid-Afrika se hervormingspogings van die internasionale stelsel onder die soeklig, en fokus veral op die rol van die VN Veiligheidsraad. Die omvang van dié proses kan nie onderskat word nie, en die studie poog om die vernaamste uitdagings van hierdie hervormings te identifiseer.

Die opdrag poog om te wys op 'n mate van teenstrydigheid wat in Suid-Afrika se buitelandse beleid te bespeur is, asook die uitdagings verbonde aan die vestiging van multilaterale betrekkinge as hoeksteen van sodanige beleid. Hoewel daar nog nie duidelikheid bestaan oor die mate van sukses wat die land behaal het met betrekking tot die gedrag van state en die praktyk van multilaterale betrekkinge nie, neem dit tans deel aan debate wat mag lei tot beleidsverandering in hierdie velde. Suid-Afrika se deelname aan die VN Veiligheidsraad se Ope Werkskommittees, rakende die hervorming van hierdie liggaam, is een voorbeeld van die land se verbintenis tot die verandering van Veiligheidsraad praktyke.

Die beperkings rakende multilaterale betrekkinge, 'n steunpilaar van internasionale beleid, word uitgelig ten einde beleidsmakers bewus te maak van die omvattende aard van 'n dikwels, onduidelike, buitelandse beleid. Die opdrag benadruk die feit dat Suid-Afrika sal moet poog om slegs betrokke te raak in internasionale aksies wat binne sy vermoëns val. Dit word afgesluit met 'n aantal aanbevelings. Een hiervan is 'n pleidooi dat Suid-Afrika permanente lidmaatskap van die 'n hervormde Veiligheidsraad verkry indien die geleentheid dit voordoet. Sodanige deelname kan egter eers geskied na deeglike oorweging van die land se vermoëns binne hierdie sfeer.

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Chapter One

South Africa's 21st-century assignment – can it be done?

1.1. Introduction

The historic speech by the former president of South Africa, Mr F. W. de Klerk, in February 1990 led to the release of Mr Nelson Mandela from prison and the beginning of a series of assignments for South Africa both at home and abroad. South Africa was welcomed back into international organisations like the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Organisation (UNO) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) after being suspended for a substantial number of years because of its domestic apartheid policy.

The coming to power of a democratically elected government in 1994 also meant dealing with certain tasks and challenges for this country. There was a need for South Africa to redefine its position in the international system. This meant, and even demanded, some alterations in South Africa's foreign policy, if not a total change. As a member of these multilateral organisations, South Africa is now compelled to take part in international debates and agree or disagree with whatever proposal is put forward on the topic that has been tabled.

South Africa's plight at the moment is to contribute positively in international institutions and furthermore to give direction, if the need arises, on the way that some of them should operate. This ambition leaves South Africa intertwined with the international system, which also has its advantages and disadvantages. This confronts South Africa with the opportunity to maximise the advantages of being in the system and minimise the disadvantages.

The reform of the Security Council happened to be one of the topics hotly debated towards the end of the twentieth century. The debate on reform

continues in the twenty-first century. A race for permanent membership in the Council is being observed at the moment. This raised the issue as to whether South Africa is a part of this race. It also raises some questions about South Africa's relations with the rest of the world and some African 'powers' like Egypt and Nigeria in particular. The nature of these relations is not clearly reflected in its foreign policy, which is also seen as being ambiguous, if not in fact at a crossroads.

1.1.1. Problem Statement

The twentieth century has seen the domination of international organisations by certain great powers. International relations practitioners are confronted with the question - why the United Nations Security Council has been so ineffective. They are also confronted with a problem of making the Security Council more effective. The reform of the United Nations Security Council is seen as one of the strategies to ensure its effectiveness when it comes to dealing with problems of instability around the globe. The question now is determining how South Africa is strategising to ensure that there is a substantial reformation of the United Nations Security Council. Whether the moves being made thus far are well calculated or not remains to be seen.

The problem that guides this research is the suppression and marginalisation of other members of the Security Council in the form of unilateral decision-making by countries which are economically and militarily strong within the United Nations Organisation and in the international system. International relations practitioners and students see the world as being an insecure place. Insecurity in the international system is brought about by a lack of consensus by statesmen on how international relations should be conducted. The unequal positions occupied by countries in international organisations like the UN is a threat to international peace, since co-operation in this body no longer prevails.

There is a hierarchy in the international system. In such a hierarchy some countries occupy the lowest position and some the highest position. There is a struggle among countries to improve their positions in such a hierarchy and that is where the core of the problem can be located. The United Nations Security Council is one institution where this hierarchy operates.

Some states are concerned about the status quo in the Security Council and they want to challenge it, while the big powers do not wish to confront the challenge and want to maintain the status quo. A challenge to the status quo will mean a change in the hierarchy. While South Africa is not the only country concerned about the state of affairs in the Security Council, its return to the international stage marked the beginning of a challenge on its side and to the members of the Security Council. The challenge here is to get member states to agree on reform and not just enlargement of the Security Council. The problem here is the unrepresentative nature of the Council, which needs to be corrected.

South Africa's dissatisfaction about the Security Council is expressed in Selebi's words when he says:

We think that the Security Council should be reshaped to become more transparent and representative. For example, it should not have secret meetings and some of its power needs to be curtailed. Since South Africa's main foreign policy objective is to be part of shaping the global agenda, we would want to become a permanent member of the Security Council. We do not want others to decide for us (Selebi, 1998:15).

From Selebi's statement one can conclude that lack of transparency is one problem that the Security Council needs to address. Furthermore there is a concern that most of the wars around the globe tend to take place in Africa and there isn't enough attention to such wars by the United Nations and its wing the Security Council in particular. A need has arisen in the 21st century for Africa to play an important role in world affairs and to steer the Security Council in the right direction.

The reform of the United Nations Security Council is an urgent matter, which needs to be attended to in the very first years of the 21st century. Reform in this situation has to do with dissolving the whole of the present Security Council and forming a new one. This has often been confused with enlargement (causing to grow larger), which at the moment seems to be a matter causing strife. Whether this reform is possible in the 'realists' world where maximum gain is said to be an absolute aim of the state is another question, which still needs to be explored. The idea here is to change the behaviour of the Security Council by removing undesirable qualities. The debates at the moment revolve around the question of enlargement, which is a shift from the main challenge (reform) with which we are faced at the moment.

The question now is what must South Africa do in its attempt to ensure that there is substantial reform of the United Nations Security Council? South Africa is concerned that the principle of sovereign equality of all members of the United Nations is not observed by member states, especially the permanent members. Furthermore, questions have been asked as to why permanent membership is not reviewed taking into consideration the rise of the European Union and the influence of France and Britain in the international body which is perceived to be declining or to have declined. Another argument has its basis on the fact that "the number of member states has increased by a third since the last enlargement in 1963" (Hindell, 1992: 32).

The short notice in terms of which the Security Council is operating has been a disadvantage to most of the members of the United Nations Organisation. As Bailey & Daws (1998:5) indicate: "The Security Council can and does meet at only an hour or two's notice". This is good in case there is a crisis, but it is often used to exclude others from the decision-making process. This is one concern that states, including South Africa, need to address in getting the Council reformed.

While Annan (2000:69) maintains, “the Council must work effectively, but it must also enjoy unquestioned legitimacy”, the challenge we face at the moment is to make it effective as well as being seen as legitimate. Those two criteria, according to Annan, “define the space within which a solution must be found”. The question that is always uppermost in statesmen’s minds is, what will follow?

1.1.2. Purpose and significance of the study

The United Nations Security Council is seen as being incapable of doing what it was meant for. Being a member of the United Nations means that you give the Security Council power to act on your behalf to maintain international peace. Furthermore, by signing the Charter members of the Security Council agreed to carry out the ‘binding’ decisions of the Security Council as is clearly reflected in Article 25 of the Charter.

Even though some states do not co-operate with the Council sometimes, in principle the decisions of the Council are binding. Co-operation in the Security Council is at the moment more theoretical than practical. The causes of failure to co-operate differ, but dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the Security Council seems to be the common one.

Article 27 of the Charter defines the voting procedure in the Security Council, something that is constantly being violated by the permanent members themselves. An affirmative vote by nine members, including concurring votes of the permanent members, is required for the Security Council to engage in a particular activity, whether it be a peace-keeping or peace-enforcement mission.

According to the Charter’s Article 28 the Security Council can hold meetings at such places other than the seat of the Organisations as in its judgement will best facilitate its work. This is also very important in case stakes happen to be very high and a need arises for a very rapid response, but this has often worked

against some members of the Security Council, both permanent and non-permanent. Decisions are in most cases taken without the consent of some permanent and non-permanent members.

The Security Council's task includes, among others, to safeguard world peace by the peaceful settlement of disputes as per the directive from Chapter VI of the Charter. The Council also determines the existence of any dispute or situation that constitutes or that may be seen as a threat to peace (Article 39) and take appropriate actions. The Council can also impose sanctions, but such sanctions are sometimes not effective.

The deteriorating relations between the permanent members, which is often the problem when it comes to decision-making, is further highlighted by Malone (1998:11-2), who points out that:

In the period 1990-7, relations among the P-5 fluctuated. The Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation) generally co-operated closely with its Western partners. Whatever the reservations of some of its foreign policy experts, the USSR yielded to strong American leadership during the 1990-1 Iraq Kuwait crisis, a pattern which would prevail in the Council through 1997.

The international community has raised serious concerns about the activities of the Security Council. Some statesmen go to the extent of questioning whether the Security Council is still relevant for today. Questions like 'Whose interests are being taken care of by the Security Council?' are being asked on a daily basis. This has prompted a need for the conduct of the Security Council to be examined and for proposals on the improvement of such a conduct.

The United States' power in the Security Council seems to be an overwhelming one, as indicated by Malone (1998:12), who says that "throughout the early 1990s and until late 1995, US power in the Council, although vastly greater than that of any single member state, was circumscribed to some extent by disagreements over the Former Yugoslavia. However following the Dayton Accords, US power in the Council became, for a time, overwhelming... in early

1996 the USA was no longer the last remaining superpower, but rather 'the supreme power'."

Given the fact that the international community is now confronted with the problem of how to make the Security Council more representative, the study made proposals on what needs to be done. This will contribute positively to the current debates and concerns of the international community and will also be an attempt to find a solution to the current deadlock on how the Security Council should be made more representative.

The current composition of and unequal power relations in the United Nations Security Council reflect the political realities of the world immediately after the Second World War. The unrepresentativeness of the Security Council is seen as perpetuating tensions in the world more than resolving them. Countries like China, Yemen, Cuba, India and Zimbabwe were not party to some decisions taken against Iraq in the past, not because they approved of what Iraq was doing but because of unilateral decision-making and abuse of power by some permanent members.

This leaves many even further dissatisfied since no disciplinary action can be taken against a permanent member. The 1998 nuclear bomb tests by France in the Pacific Ocean is a good example of total disregard of international treaties by statesmen. The study further look at South Africa's position on matters of this nature and propose the way South Africa should negotiate its way in its attempt to make this international dream a reality. There is a need for the Security Council to be reformed - made more representative to reflect the changes in the international system.

1.1.3. A concise explanation of what is wrong with the conduct of the Security Council

After 1945 statesmen were confronted with a challenge to make the world safe for democracy and to ensure that there is lasting peace in the international system. The United Nations Organisation was formed with the Security Council as one of its agents. After the UN's formation the permanent members of the Security Council felt that the present set-up of the Council should not be challenged/changed whether the international society is satisfied with the set-up or not; this is why there is a need today for the Security Council to be reformed to make it more representative and reflect the changes in the international system. There is also an urgent need for the Security Council to act according to what the Charter stipulates. According to Petrie (1996:69), "recent years seem to bear witness to a well intentioned but wholly unfortunate idea that Security Council members are not entitled to disagree. A legacy of the seemingly capricious casting of the veto for ideological reasons – that appeared tangential to matters of international security during the Cold War – and prevented the UN from fulfilling its intended role, now frame a different but no less damaging mindset".

Petrie (1996:78) further postulates that "Operations recently coordinated through the United Nations do not take the precepts of international law and the logic which produced them fully into account. Many recent United Nations' operations were precedent setting. Innovative situations are like uncharted waters. The United Nations is finding the rocks and shoals of the new world order with alarming regularity".

It has already been pointed out that international relations practitioners and students see the world as being insecure. The following brings about insecurity in the international system. Permanent members disagree sometimes on matters of peacekeeping and peace enforcement or the kind of mediation to implement

when two or more states are in conflict. It happens sometimes that some missions get carried out even if one permanent member disagrees, but this is a violation of the idea behind the veto right. It is clear that in this situation members should go back to Article 27 of the Charter as a guiding rule. Those having influence on the Council ignore the Charter in this situation.

A country gets attacked sometimes when one permanent member disagreed with the move, Iraq being the basic example. This leads to countries perceiving an element of dictatorship in the Security Council, which can bring about confrontation between the permanent members themselves. Confrontation between the permanent members constitutes a serious threat to world peace and security. In this situation the world becomes insecure, since permanent members also have their own allies both in the UN and outside.

A struggle among countries to improve their positions of influence and power in the international system manifests itself in such a way that countries no longer see the need to obey the United Nations Charter. Countries occupying permanent positions in the Security Council feel that by being flexible on the matter (reform of the Security Council) there will be a destruction of order in the international system. The kind of 'order' they see is seen by those without permanent membership as disorder.

Since its inception the Council has been charged with the duty to ensure that there is peace in the international system. There is a concern in the international community that the Security Council is not doing what it was meant for. The United States of America, Britain, China, Russia and France occupy the current permanent membership seats of the United Nations Security Council. These are the countries that are supposed to have a great and equal influence on the activities of the United Nations Security Council. They are the ones who are supposed to (collectively) sanction the activities of the Security Council.

They are given equal power to influence the activities of the Security Council by their right to veto, something that is not mentioned in the Charter. Having a right to veto in this situation means that a permanent member can prohibit the Security Council from taking particular action. Such a member's decision not to allow a particular activity, which the Security Council has to undertake, must be respected and taken into consideration. This means that the Security Council is not supposed to act even if the remaining four permanent members happened to agree on that particular activity. An activity in this situation can entail an attack or any other peacekeeping or peace enforcing mission. Those who occupy permanent seats in the Security Council no longer respect one another's right to veto.

All the permanent members no longer guide the Security Council collectively. The resolution by the Permanent Five to give themselves veto powers was not a solution to the problem of attaining lasting peace in the international system. They failed to realise that a resolution is not necessarily a solution. The United States and the United Kingdom sanction some activities without a consensus being reached by all permanent members, and they now influence the Security Council more than any other member of the Council.

There is a concern in the international society that the Security Council is now used as an instrument of other countries' foreign policies. There is no unity among permanent members of the Security Council. This often leads to unilateral decisions being taken on how the Security Council should act in times of crisis. For example, not all members of the Security Council sanctioned the 1990 attack on Iraq.

The December 1998 bombing of Iraq was also not sanctioned by all members of the Security Council. Some members opposed the idea of bombing and their right to veto was ignored. This shows that the Security Council is now an organ

of a particular country (or countries). In this situation it can be assumed that the Security Council is an organ of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The United States of America initiates the move and Britain supports it.

The Security Council is charged with ensuring that there is peace in the international system, but it does not have any programme on the table to deal with conflicts in certain parts of the world. Conflicts on the African continent do not receive the appropriate kind of attention from the Security Council. This means that it is not serving the international community as it was meant to. The Security Council is at the moment serving the US and the United Kingdom. Under these circumstances one can conclude that the Security Council need reformation. The Security Council is now seen as an unpopular body within the United Nations Organisation that is taking the international community nowhere except towards chaos.

Even though the Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation, Mr Kofi Annan, tends to distance himself from the question of Security Council reform, he at least acknowledges that there are problems in the Organisation, which need to be resolved. Annan (2000:69) postulates that “ the United Nations must also adapt itself to the changing times”. This necessitated a study on the position of South Africa as far as the reform of the Security Council is concerned, since South Africa is a member of the United Nations Organisation.

1.1.4. Research Questions

To pursue the above-mentioned research goal, answers will be sought to the following questions:

- What is the current state of the debate internationally on reform of the United Nations Security Council?

- What proposals are on the table and what has the reaction to these proposals been?
- Where and how has South Africa expressed itself in this regard?
- Does the country have a policy on this issue, and how clearly or unambiguously is it formulated?
- What are the interests underlying the South African approach towards the reform of the United Nations Security Council? Are these interests uniformly accepted within policy-making circles or are there differences of opinion?
- Has South Africa secured international support for its position, specifically among the major actors in the UN system? In addition, what opposition has it encountered?
- How is South Africa handling the obvious difference between its position and the position of the OAU? Is this an issue that is affecting South Africa's position on the continent negatively?
- How has South Africa's prominent role in multilateral diplomacy helped to secure its reputation in the UN circles? What opposition has the country encountered in this regard?

1.1.5. How are these questions going to be answered (Methodology)

Being a hypothesis-generating policy study, this project has relied almost exclusively on a qualitative and discursive methodology. As Neuman (1996:329) indicates, qualitative data are "in the form of words from documents, observations, transcripts". This involves looking at the literature on the United Nations Organisation focusing specifically on the way that power relations

within the organisation led to chaos in the international system. The study is exploratory in nature. The primary sources of information are:

- A comprehensive literature study on the matter (United Nations Security Council reform) and the various proposals on the table.
- A survey of available information in public sources (the media and academic and semi-academic publications) about South Africa's position on reform of the United Nations Security Council, South Africa's role in the UN and its diplomacy in this regard.
- A detailed study of the Organisation of African Unity and Non-Aligned Movement documents on the proposals of these two bodies for reform of the UNSC.
- A set of structured interviews with South African officials and other informed sources on South Africa's policy. Formal and informal discussions with selected representatives of the international community in South Africa to determine their attitude to South Africa's position and a survey of published comments by South Africans (mostly in the form of newspaper columns) on the UNSC and South Africa's role in it.

1.2.1. Literature Review

The international community has been raising its concerns about the state of affairs in the Security Council for a number of years now. This led to views being put forward by academics and different statesmen on the need for substantial reform of the Security Council to make it more representative of the international community. Although South Africa has expressed concern about the state of affairs in the Security Council, it never took a unilateral position on the question of reform of the United Nations Security Council. South Africa's

plight is at the moment reflected by its active participation in the NAM Working Group on Security Council Reform.

The Non- Aligned Movement's 13th ministerial conference held in Cartagena on the 8th and the 9th April 2000 declared:

We uphold the NAM position on the vital role of the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security and the strengthening of international co-operation, in line with the principles of the UN Charter and the equal sovereignty of its Members. In this context, we recall the decisions and directives of the XII Summit with respect to the various reform proposals presented by the Secretary-General as outlined in his Report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Program of Reform" ... We emphasise the importance of ensuring that the role of the Security Council conforms to its mandate as defined in the United Nations Charter, so that there is no encroachment on the jurisdiction and the prerogatives of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.¹

In 1995, when the UN was celebrating its 50th anniversary, South Africa and other third world countries saw this as a chance to start bringing about changes to this world body. As Landsberg (1995:1-2) points out, focusing "their attention specifically on the alleged legitimacy of the Security Council, these states favour an expanded Security Council that would better serve international peace and security".

South Africa is concerned about the state of affairs in the Security Council. Its commitment on the matter was expressed on various international platforms by former President Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, the current President of South Africa, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, as well as the present Foreign Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Landsberg (1995:2-3) points out that "The ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) committed itself to work for a 'fundamental overhaul' of the Council". The scope of this "overhaul" still remains to be seen. The need to reform the UN Security Council has been reiterated many times by statesmen and by the current Secretary General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim. Another

¹ See Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries xiii Ministerial Conference Cartagena, 8 and 9 April 2000 final document. <<http://www.nam.gov.za/xiiiminconf/final.htm>> 10/10/2000.

concern raised by member states is that the resources of the UN are unevenly distributed and sometimes channelled to missions that member states did not agree upon.

The present Council is seen as a product of World War II, which means that it became increasingly irrelevant in the contemporary world. As Landsberg (1995:3) notes, "This state of affairs does not correspond to contemporary international conditions. After 50 years the Security Council is still in the same position in which it started. Although the Cold War has come to an end, the Security Council continues to reflect the attempt by the victorious powers of World War II, namely the United States (US), Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), France, the United Kingdom (UK) and China, to operate a highly formalised concert system which regard Germany and Japan as enemies".

In the process of reforming the United Nations' Security Council, enlargement of the Security Council's permanent membership will be one of the logical steps to be taken. This will also be in line with the first reform proposal. Perhaps the idea of considering geographical location when allocating seats, especially permanent seats, is important in this process. This might help in dealing with the problem of unilateral or bilateral decision making in the Security Council.

Multilateral decision-making will be the way to go and this will leave many member states satisfied and few dissatisfied. Moskowitz (1980:171) points out that "clearly, the roots and reaches of United Nations actions and decisions are not necessarily solidly anchored in the principles and purposes of the Charter, nor governed and defined by the objectives of the World Organisation". This serves as a wake up call to member states and an urgent need for a review of the role of some member states in the organisation as well as a possible amendment of the charter.

Not only statesmen are concerned about the state of affairs in the Security Council. Civil society is also concerned. South Africans are concerned about the Security Council and some are prepared to put their ideas on this issue forward. Landsberg (1995:5) points out that "the Security Council should in future comprise those states from both the 'developed' and 'developing' groupings who can best guarantee (or threaten) world order. South Africa and other Third World states will have to argue for a Security Council which will maintain international security more effectively".

The international community is concerned about the conservative orientation of the UN, which has compelled the Security Council to act in an unjust manner on several occasions. There is a concern that few countries from one part of the world have greater control than other members of the organisation. The United Nations Organisation has been politicised and made a partisan body and this has always determined the actions of the Security Council. The veto right given to only five members of the Council represents the lack of democracy within the United Nations Organisation and its arms, and the Security Council in particular. The international society is of the opinion that organs of the UN like the Security Council should be made more representative in order to satisfy the demands and aspirations of many member states.

In a criticism of the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia, the South African department of foreign affairs declared that "the South African Government strongly emphasise the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security. The erosion of the UN Charter and the authority of the Security Council cannot be tolerated by the international community"². This shows South Africa's concern about the need for a reform of the United Nations Security Council and is further expressed in the Red Fort Declaration of March 1997. "The declaration, issued by Mandela

² See *The Star*, Comment. 7 April 1999.

and the then Indian prime minister, HD Deva Gowda explicitly called for the reform of the United Nations Security Council”³

1.2.2. Chapter Summaries

This chapter presented an overview of the state of affairs in the Security Council since its inception. It exposes the problem in the Security Council and it also outlines the Council’s blunders. It also outlined the research problem, research questions as well as the purpose of the study. It also outlined the research methodology.

A brief literature review was also undertaken in this chapter. This was an attempt to provide the big picture on the aims, objectives as well as the benefits of the study. This chapter aimed at outlining some ideas and concerns in the international community on the status quo in the United Nations Security Council. It outlined the power relations in the United Nations Organisations, with a specific focus on the Security Council. The other chapters further outline South Africa’s position on this issue and the conflicting proposals from different parts of the world. The paper also advises South Africa to call for an amendment of the Charter as a guiding instrument on the way that the United Nations and the Security Council in particular should operate, rather than just pushing for a permanent seat for itself.

In an attempt to give direction on the first step to be taken in order to resolve the problem, Chapter Four emphasises the idea of rallying regional organisations as well as the importance of this step. Furthermore, the paper attempts to make South Africa conscious of the fact that it has not yet secured support internationally and of the disadvantages of pushing further (for a permanent seat) without any support. The last chapter is a summary of the whole paper as well as some ideas on the way forward.

³ See *Sowetan* “South Africa sitting on the fence” 3 August 2000.

1.2.3. Limitations of the Research

The Secretary General of the United Nations has proposed some reform of the United Nations. The kind of reform proposed by Annan does not give any indication of the way that this reform of the United Nations Security Council should be carried out. The reform strategies proposed by Annan are seen as cosmetic and he also tends to distance himself from the sensitive question of the Security Council reform.

The research is not concerned with the reform of other agencies of the United Nations, but is only concerned with the reform of the Security Council. It does not reflect Annan's views on the reform of the Security Council, since an interview with him was not possible. It also does not reflect the ideas of the Presidents of both Egypt and Nigeria, since interview with these leaders was not possible. It also does not reflect the ideas of South Africa's representative to the United Nations since interview with him was not possible.

1.2.4. Delimitations of the Research

The information on Nigeria and Egypt appears in papers presented by various academics. It was further expanded by an interview with an Egyptian Deputy Chief of Mission in South Africa (Egyptian Embassy) and communication by electronic mail with the Nigerian Senior Counsellor, Political Matters at the Nigerian Embassy. The position of the Permanent Five is also reflected in the work of various academics. It was possible to ascertain South Africa's position on the matter from papers by academics as well as the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was possible to obtain a picture of South Africa's foreign (including its analysis) policy, which is believed to be at crossroads, from various academic papers as well as from documents from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Chapter Two

Understanding the 'climate' around the issue of reform - who says what?

2.1. Introduction

The debate on the reform of the United Nations was triggered by the international community's realisation that the Council is no longer serving the international community the way it is supposed to. An understanding of the current power relations in the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, becomes important in this situation to help one understand where to start in an attempt to resolve the problem. It is important to note that reform (in the case of the Security Council) is a broad concept, which includes among other things, enlargement. The words reform and enlargement are used interchangeably throughout this paper, hence there is a need to understand their meanings as explained in Chapter One of this paper. In this chapter an explanation of the power relations within the Council, some reform proposals put forward thus far and the reactions such proposals have evoked will be outlined. The current state of the debate internationally on the issue of reform will be outlined.

2.1.1. Explanation of the power relations within the United Nations Organisation

The Security Council of the United Nations Organisation consists of fifteen members. Out of that number, ten countries are non-permanent, which means that they occupy such positions on a rotational basis, and five countries are permanent. This set-up (with regard to permanent members) has been in place ever since the UN was formed. There was an increase in the number of the members of the Security Council in 1963, but the changes only involved non-permanent members. Those who occupy permanent positions within the Council primarily determine the operations of the Security Council. Two of the

permanent countries happened to emerge as the superpowers after World War II.

They, together with three others, tasked themselves with ensuring that there is stability in the international system. Different statesmen and academics expressed their concern with the United Nations Organisation's consolidation of power to a few countries and disregarding others, especially those in the South and other under-developed countries. Such concerns are reflected in the academic world by, among others Diescho (1996:10), who points out that "United Nations power structures were constituted and shaped under the imperatives of an old era, an era of super-power politics, racism, Cold War considerations and lack of regard for the principles of justice and equity".

According to the report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (1995:234), "the great powers that had won World War II did not intend this arrangement to be temporary. Initially their position was understandable because they led the fight against Fascism and aggression... It led to the conviction that they themselves should have special powers in the world of the future notwithstanding formal acceptance of the principles of universality and the equality of member states. These privileges, as enshrined in the charter, were to dominate the system of internationalism developed and ordained by the 'great powers'".

To ensure peace and stability in the international system the Security Council was set up to help attain such a goal. It became a key "institutional arm of the system... with power to take decisions that bound all member-states and to authorize enforcement action under the collective security provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter.... In San Francisco, it was decided that China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Soviet Union should be

‘permanent’ members of the Security Council and that each should have a veto over council’s decisions” (Ibid).

The San Francisco decision favoured few countries to the disadvantage of many. Little did they (interlocutors in that meeting) know the challenge and complications they were to leave for their successors. There have been some changes (minor) in the way the Security Council was organised after the San Francisco Conference. Membership of the United Nations organisation also increased up to nearly four times the number of the original founder states of the organisation. The Security Council's composition has increased from eleven in 1963 to fifteen, something that still leaves many dissatisfied.

The original plan by the main players in the process of forming the United Nations and the Security Council in particular was that the Council would be a small body, originally with only eleven members: five plus six rotating members who would each serve for only two years. “The elements of privilege – permanent seats and the power of veto – were vigorously contested in San Francisco, both as a matter of principle and by countries whose people had also fought and died in the war against Fascism. But the victorious ‘great powers’ prevailed. A few months earlier Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin had already made up their minds on this issue. The vision of a new world order informed by the lofty principles of the Charter was combined with the narrow presumption that only the victors could guarantee the realization of those principles” (Our Global Neighbourhood, 1995:234).

This naivety by the above-mentioned statesmen about the way that international politics would unfold as time goes on resulted in their making decisions that were not going to ensure peace and stability, but to trigger resistance from other countries who happened to be dissatisfied with the status quo. The Security Council of the United Nations, as per agreement by the Big

Five, was to operate in such a way that a permanent member would have the power to prevent others from taking any action he or she considers inappropriate, but that is no longer the case in the contemporary world. One country has unilaterally declared itself the world's policeman.

In 1963 the Charter was amended. Non-permanent members increased from six to ten. The Council's total strength went up from eleven to fifteen and the number of votes required for a decision from seven to nine. The challenge here is to make the Security Council legitimate in the eyes of nation states. The main concern is that five permanent members derive their primacy from events fifty years ago. This is unacceptable, since non-permanent members do not have any influence over the decisions taken by the Council. From what Selebi (1998) points out, one can see that there must be an element of truth in the claim that the Council's decisions are taken on the basis of private consultations among permanent members themselves.

It does happen sometimes that not even all of them (permanent members) are involved in the decision-making process. Imposing decisions is one flaw adopted by the 'leaders' of the Council at the moment. Seeing that there is a general consensus that the Security Council needs to be reformed, an open-ended working group was set up by the General Assembly in December 1993 to look into the possibilities of reforming the Council and the way the process can be undertaken.

Different countries expressed their concerns about the Security Council and the formation of an open-ended working group was seen as a progressive move by nations to improve international relations and was welcomed. This was an attempt to free the world from oppression by the permanent five. The aim was

to release the world from the “ironclad armour of the veto”¹ which statesmen did not agree upon and which might perhaps be taken by nation states as a unilateral extension of the Charter by the Permanent Five.

The United Nations Organisation was formed in an era of ideological struggle. States were still ‘healing the wounds’ of World War II. The international system was still characterised by mistrust. A country's behaviour in the international system was shaped more by what had happened in the past than by a quest for a better future, one of equality and lasting peace. Relations were characterised more by unfair practices and diplomatic struggle, which had their dire results.

During the Iraq-Kuwait crisis, for example, the provisions of Chapter Five² of the Charter were constantly ignored and the unequal power relations within the UN became very clear. Differences between the permanent five were clearly indicated by their inability to reach consensus on how better to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. This confirms Merrils’s (1998:257) view that “tension between East and West effectively wrecked the United Nations as collective security system... The Organisation is a reflection of the social and political relations of states”.

As a result of unilateral decision-making, lack of consensus as well as a clear line of division within the permanent five, Merrils (1998:258) concludes:

The United Nations, then, is in no sense a world government, but a diplomatic forum in which persuasion, argument, negotiation and a search for consensus are the means available for handling international disputes. Like any human institution, its organisation and procedures are imperfect and could be improved. At root, however, its

¹ See Our Global Neighbourhood – The Report of the Commission on Global Governance. Oxford University Press - 1995: 238.

² See Charter of the United Nations, Article 27: Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members. Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members, provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of article 52, a party to dispute shall abstain from voting.

activities – successes as well as failures – are less a matter of institutional arrangements than a reflection of the statesmanship, or otherwise, of those responsible for the direction of affairs.

The debate on the reform of the United Nations Security Council triggered another debate on the veto. The veto is seen by statesmen as another strategy to give more power to the permanent five – something few statesmen agreed upon when the United Nations Organisation was formed and something that is not clearly stipulated in the Charter. It is believed that this arrangement was an agreement among the permanent five in a meeting at Yalta, as Petrie (1996) points out. This agreement is today not honoured by the same countries that initially claimed they will never dishonour. The veto right is now confined to one if not two countries only. Some countries are being strategically stripped of their right to veto.

The Yalta agreement did not help much when it came to maintaining international peace and security, but only served as a means to satisfy the interests of a few countries. This gave rise to severe criticism of the veto by statesmen and an emphasis on an urgent need to do away with it. Apart from this criticism, it still “remains essential if the UN is to continue to enjoy the support of the Permanent Members of the Security Council. It is fair to conclude that without their involvement the organisation would quickly lose any semblance of effectiveness and solvency” (Petrie, 1996:68).

From what Petrie postulates one can detect that national interests are placed first when it comes to decisions by member states of the United Nations. While one can agree with his conclusion that the veto remains essential if the UN is to continue to enjoy the support of the Permanent Members, one tends to disagree with him in other respects. The general concern here is with the ineffectiveness of the Security Council. Under such circumstances it becomes clear that, if nation states are not satisfied with the current state of affairs, then Petrie’s claim of effectiveness does not hold water at the moment.

Furthermore if we are to agree that the Council's effectiveness is to be measured by its ability to maintain peace internationally, this means Petrie's claim of effectiveness can further be disputed taking into considerations intra- and inter-state conflicts that have occurred ever since the United Nations Organisation was formed. The veto is seen as a spear and a shield at the same time. It is a tool that is not available to the non-permanent and those who do not have a seat in the Security Council. The permanent members punish those who interfere with 'order' in the international system and in turn defend themselves against any action initiated within the Council aimed at punishing a permanent member, all these in the name of the veto.

2.1.2. The current state of the debate internationally on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Proposals on the table and reactions to such proposals

Concerns about the state of affairs in the Security Council were followed by a number of proposals on the way the Council could be made more representative. Several Commissions were set up to look into the matter and their recommendations seem not to have been taken into consideration. Among others was the Commission on Global Governance, which cherishes the idea of enlarging the Council to make it more representative of the UN's membership.

Besides the Commission on Global Governance, the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations and the United States Commission on Improving the Effectiveness of the United Nations were set up to look into the possibilities of reforming the UN Security Council. They all came with different reports, which had some similarities here and there. The recommendations made by such groups too seem not to have been taken into consideration. The proposals and/or recommendations met with opposition from other parts of the world. Some antagonistic ideas on the reform of the

Security Council have been put forward. They meet opposition from both the developing and the developed states.

Krasno (1995:339-340) points out that "all these reports express a need to reform and expand the Security Council to reflect the current changes in the balance of power and the large increase in the UN membership since its last expansion in the 1960s." The reports put forward recommendations that are unpopular with the permanent five. Almost each and every member of the UN has an idea on how the Security Council has to be reformed. It is also each and every member state's wish for reform to be in its favour, but this is clearly impossible.

Several countries propose reforms, which include expansion of the Security Council to a number above 21, but this proposal America and its allies find difficult to accept. Contrary to America's position that the Council's expansion should not exceed 21, Germany, according to Kastrup (1999), maintains that "an expansion to only 20 or 21 seats will not fully exhaust the existing possibilities for obtaining a more balanced and equitable composition of the Council membership. And it will not ensure sufficient additional representation to the developing world"³

The Commission on Global Governance put forward another proposal, which is in conflict with the Yale/Ford report. The Commission on Global Governance believed that "the world must find a better basis for constituting its highest organ of governance than permanent membership for a few countries. The commission believed that the veto is an unacceptable feature in global governance that clearly the number of veto wielding members should not be increased in any new arrangements. To add more permanent members and give

³ See Kastrup, D. 1999. Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations. <http://www.germany-info.org/UN/un_state_02_08_99.htm> 3/5/2001

them a veto would be regression, not reform" (Our Global Neighbourhood, 1995: 239).

The Non-Aligned Movement also reacted to the question of Security Council reform and it expressed its dissatisfaction with the veto and a need to eliminate it. "In promoting reforms to enhance the Council's legitimacy and credibility, the NAM Working Group has primarily focused on those reform aspects that enjoy overwhelming support among the UN membership. These include reforms to enhance the transparency of the working methods and decision-making of the Council (Cluster II issues), and curtailing the use of the veto to actions taken under Chapter VII of the UN Charter..."⁴

Krasno (1996:339-340) points out that "The Yale/Ford report proposes addition of up to five new permanent members. While the new permanent members would also have the veto, the veto would be limited to decisions on peacekeeping and peace enforcement". The Commission on Global Governance's proposal of two seats for the industrialised countries and three from developing countries is in conflict with the OAU's plea for two permanent seats for Africa. Furthermore, the Commission does not affirm the idea of getting countries like Britain and France out of the Council despite the fact that their influence declined.

Amongst other bodies active in the debate on the reform of the Council is the South Centre, which according to Krasno (1996:340) "had the most revolutionary approach saying that the General Assembly should elect the members of the Security Council and no nation would be guaranteed a seat 'for life'. This proposal would perhaps bring about progress when it comes to

⁴ See Report on the Activities of the Non-Aligned Movement since the XII Summit held in 1998 in Durban, which South Africa, in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, presented to the XIII NAM Ministerial Conference held from 7 to 9 April 2000 in Cartagena, Colombia. <<http://www.nam.gov.za/media/chair.htm>> 10/10/2000

ensuring international peace and stability but the challenge is to get permanent members to co-operate on crucial moves like this one; for now it is just a dream that no one is sure will ever come true.

According to the proposals put forward, the reform of the Security Council needs to take the form of increasing the number of the members to either 21 or 24 or 26. There is no international consensus on the number thus far. Increasing the number is viewed as regressive as has already been made clear by the Commission on Global Governance. The final part of the process has to do with the veto. This is an idea that the United States and its allies do not really like to entertain. There are mixed feelings about the veto. Some statesmen are of the opinion that it must be abolished while others maintain that it must be extended to those who will be permanent members after the reform has taken place. Those with veto privileges see this as having their power removed or being neutralised.

The 'major' proposal put forward at the moment is that of extending the Security Council to 26 members. This has already met with opposition from the permanent four, excluding China. Twelve Commissions have been set up thus far to look into the possibilities of reforming the UN Security Council. A pile of reports tabled, each with its different views on the matter, which at the end were not implemented. The permanent members do not always welcome the reports because the kinds of reform they propose bring something advantageous to the smaller states and almost nothing to them. If the proposed reforms can be implemented, smaller states will have greater influence on the Security Council.

The report by the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, which according to Luck (2000:99) happened to be "the most influential and most widely read", had its own opponents too. The main

opponent were the South Centre with its report, *For a strong and Democratic United Nations: A South Perspective of UN Reform*. In its 1996 report the South Centre, as Luck (2000:95) points out:

went out of its way to cast doubts about the proposals enunciated by the Commission on Global Governance and the Yale/Ford panel, the two most prominent efforts prepared for the UN's fiftieth anniversary commemoration the year before. Despite the fact that both commissions were co-chaired by prominent leaders from the developing world, the South Centre claimed that the groups' views were too reflective of northern criticisms of the UN. Pointing to what it contended was the "hidden agenda" of the North, the Centre accused developed nations of trying to "mask efforts to unilaterally change the character and political thrust of the organisation, and to subject it more fully to the fiat and interests of the a few powerful countries.

It appeared, according to Luck, that "this study was prepared, in part, to throw cold water on the whole reform effort and to frustrate whatever modest political momentum had gathered behind some of the other studies. Though this report is rarely cited and its proposals have made little progress, it appears to have been influential in a negative and defensive manner" (Ibid).

Affirming the prevailing notion that the permanent members do not want the kind of 'order' they created, which is seen by others as disorder, to be disturbed, Field (1998:16) points out that "the reform of the Security Council is crucial given its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is clearly not a priority for the permanent members of the Security Council - the US, UK, France, Russia, and China - to agitate for the democratisation of this body, which would only see their power reduced".

According to Mills (1997:12), "the US has previously supported the creation of permanent seats for Japan and Germany, both major economic powers which respectively contribute over 15% and 9% to the UN's budget. Washington's latest initiative proposes the establishment, however, of extra permanent seats for Africa, Asia and Latin America". The process still has its problems since the US and its allies do not put their ideas into practice. This causes states to lose hope that the US can assist in the reform process. The US suggests increasing

the Council to 21 members, while others suggest 24 or 26 – hence a deadlock on the ultimate size of the Security Council.

The proposal to increase the Security Council to 26 members is not a popular one amongst permanent members of the Council. Field (1998:16) points out that “while it is generally accepted that the Council be enlarged to make it more representative, the United States, France, Britain and Russia are opposed to any enlargement that will bring its total number to over 23 members”. The permanent four (excluding China) are prepared to settle for 23 members when it comes to enlarging the Security Council.

If the Security Council is to be enlarged to 23 and developing countries insist on having two seats for Africa, one for Asia, one for Latin America and one for an industrialised country, and the idea is implemented, the chances of Japan or Germany getting a permanent seat will be jeopardised. This is something France, Britain, Russia and the United States would not like. A proposal to add Germany gave rise to a protest from developing countries, saying that there should at least be one seat for the European Union. France and the United Kingdom tend to be diametrically opposed to such an idea.

The proposals put forward by the developing countries are in conflict with what the developed countries, especially US, France, Britain and Russia, excluding China, put forward. The OAU proposed no less than 26 members. The proposal recommends two permanent and two non-permanent Security Council seats for Africa. The question of who goes for a seat must be answered at regional level. A limitation on the veto is something the OAU favours, but the permanent members find this difficult to accept.

Field (1998:16) points out that “to truly democratise the Council South Africa would need to advocate for the elimination of all permanent seats and the

creation of regional seats elected by the General Assembly, although this would not be acceptable to the existing permanent members. It is recommended that South Africa adopt the following position on the Security Council reform:

- Expand the Security Council to a total of 26 members,
- The permanent African seats should be rotating, enabling a number of key African states to exercise their influence and share the cost of permanent member status. Asia and Latin America can decide as regions whether or not their permanent seats should be rotational.
- One permanent seat should be reserved for industrialised countries enabling states such as Germany, Japan, Canada, Italy and Sweden to contend.
- Veto power should be extended to incoming permanent members and its use limited to actions taken under Chapter VII of the UN charter”.

The idea of extending the veto power to potential new members is seen as making the Council unmanageable. This is seen as something unlikely to make the UN Security Council more effective. Highlighting the politics around veto, permanent membership as well as the likely clumsy nature of the proposed Security Council, Rajan (1999:37) points out:

while undoubtedly furthering the interests of democracy in the world body, the creation of additional veto powers could make the whole system unwieldy. If this happens, very little in reality is likely to get past the Security Council. For this reason, more likely than the extension of the veto is a complete working of the UN's decision making processes. For one thing, the Great Powers are unlikely to give up voluntarily their status and power, for obvious reasons, they have made this clear in not only giving up their permanent membership of the UN Security Council (with the right of veto) but also by, in effect, preferring only the additional membership of two of their cohorts, Germany and Japan – Asian Africa, Latin America and other States of India, Nigeria, Egypt and Brazil, being considered (in effect as of secondary priority).

The view of the Commission on Global Governance is in conflict with the ‘main’ proposal of 26-member expansion – a proposal South Africa has aligned itself with. It proposes adding two industrialised countries to the Security Council. If that is supposed to be the case, it means Africa's plea for two seats will be

ignored, since Latin America would want to have a seat and one seat would go to an Asian underdeveloped country.

Krasno (1996:340) points out that "some countries, that is, Italy and Mexico, have recommended that new permanent seats should be allocated on a rotating formula based on regional representation and taking into account various levels of economic development". This recommendation is reasonable, since it will give different countries a chance to have a permanent seat (rotating) but is also likely to limit the chances of other countries if economic status of a country will be taken into consideration when it comes to allocating a permanent seat.

Furthermore, "there is a strong opposition by some countries to allowing more permanent seats on the Security Council, stating that this already discriminatory mechanism should not be perpetuated... Expanding the size of the Security Council to 23-25 might be more feasible by adding only non-permanent members" (Krasno, 1996:340). The addition of only non-permanent members means that such members will not have much influence on the activities of the Council, since they will not have a veto power. Furthermore, having the right to veto is not necessarily a guarantee that things will go the way one wants. China and Russia are the basic examples of the veto-wielding powers, but they cannot give direction to the Security Council at all times. Military might seems to be the most important factor when it comes to controlling the Security Council.

There is a fear that an increase in the size of the Security Council will affect its effectiveness and its efficiency. As it has already been argued that the effectiveness of the Security Council should be measured by its ability to ensure international peace, it is difficult to maintain the position that the Security Council is effective. The Pontignano Conference of August 1994, held in Italy,

did not help much in resolving the deadlock on how the Security Council needs to be reformed.

Instead it was just a repetition of the arguments that had been put forward before, which included, among other things, the point that “... increasing the size of the UN Security Council would affect its effectiveness as well as efficiency... a larger number of permanent members would also affect the decision-making process and thus affect the efficiency of the Security Council” (Adamczick-Gerteis, 1997:566). The current status of the United Nations Security Council is clearly depicted in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Current Representativeness in the Security Council

Permanent Members	Non-permanent Members
United States	Asia (49 states)
Russia	Asia
China	Africa (53 states)
Britain	Africa
France	Africa
	Latin America (33 states)
	Latin America
	W. Europe and others (27 states)
	W. Europe and others
	E. Europe (20 states)

Source: *United Nations Reform, Perspectives from the South and North*. FGD Occasional Paper No 14.July 1998.

The current discourse on the Security Council reform led to a proposal shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Proposed Security Council

Existing Permanent Members	Existing Non-Permanent Members
United States	African seat
Russia	African seat
China	African seat
Britain	Asian seat
France	Asian seat
	Latin America seat
	Latin American seat
	Eastern Europe seat
	Western Europe and others
	Western Europe and others
Additional Permanent Members	Additional Non-Permanent Members
1. African seat	1. African seat
2. African seat	2. African seat
3. Asian seat	3. Asian seat
4. Latin American seat	4. Asian seat
5. Industrialised country seat	5. American seat
	6. Arab seat.

Source: *United Nations Reform, Perspectives from the South and North*. FGD Occasional Paper No 14. July 1998.

The plan proposed by the permanent five is in total conflict with Africa's proposal as put forward by the OAU. There is a clash with the number and with the allocation of seats. The 'Western plan' is to enlarge the Council from 15 to 24. Expanding the present five permanent seats to 10 and the present 10 non-permanent seats to 14 will do this. Germany, Japan and India will constitute the new permanent five. One seat will have to rotate among Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa. Latin American and the Caribbean decide on one seat to be allocated to them.

Table 2.3. The Permanent Five's proposed Security Council

Existing Permanent Members	Existing Non-Permanent Members
United States	African seat
Russia	African seat
China	African seat
Britain	Asian seat
France	Asian seat
	Latin American seat
	Latin American seat
	Eastern Europe seat
	Western Europe and others
	Western Europe and others
	Western Europe and others
Additional Permanent Members	Additional Non-Permanent Members
Germany	Four Non-Permanent Members
Japan	
India	
Latin American seat	
African seat	

This plan is further in conflict with Africa's plight as expressed in the words of South Africa's Foreign Affairs Director General, Sipho Pityana, who says, "I do not believe Africa's demand for two seats is unreasonable".⁵ Participation in the debates on the reform of the Security Council is a mammoth task for South Africa since there is no guarantee that reform will be possible in the near future. Many factors delay the process, which, as Luck (2000:89) points out, "is highly political, both within and among member states".

The question of national interests becomes entangled in the whole process. It sometimes means losing a friend or injuring a friendship. Steps that South Africa is taking at the moment are putting the country's diplomatic ties to the

⁵ Sipho Pityana cited in *Business Day* 25 July 2000. SA 'working on revamp of UN council.'

test at regional, continental and international level. South Africa's relations with India are among those that are being put to the test at the moment. The fact that India is a leading non-aligned state in a unipolar world, with very limited manoeuvrability, means that its proposals with regard to reform will be in conflict with those of other regional organisations. The 'major' proposal put forward thus far (26 members, which South Africa supports at the moment) by the developing countries minimises India's chances of getting a permanent seat, something that puts the relations between South Africa and both India and Japan to the test.

First, the proposed structure allows for only one Asian country to obtain a permanent seat. India is also looking to get a permanent seat in the reformed Security Council. In Asia there is Japan, too, which is the West's favoured country thus far. Secondly, should South Africa support India in this situation, it might harm its relations with Japan. Lastly, it is already difficult for Asian countries to come up with a conclusion on who goes for the permanent seat on their behalf. India and Japan cannot support one another, given the fact that Japan is already seen as an ally to the West than the East.

Germany and Japan's claim to permanent seats is motivated by their ability in most cases to bail out the UN in times of financial crisis. This makes it difficult for the permanent members to leave either of the two countries behind when the Council is reformed. Supposing that India gets a permanent seat, this means that the second country to be considered will be Germany or Japan. Should Germany assume a permanent seat, the South will see this as a consolidation of power for the West. Suppose Japan gets a permanent seat, the West will have to compromise on Germany, something that they do not like, given the financial contribution Germany makes to the United Nations Organisation. There has been a series of objections to this proposed Security Council.

Objections are both regional and international. At an international level the problem lies with the permanent members; at regional level the problem lies with the potential permanent members themselves. There is antagonism between some countries in the same region and they are unable to support one another for the seat.

According to Field (1998:17), "the viability of such a position on Security Council reform may be challenged on a number of fronts. One foreseeable objection may be to the recommendation for rotational regional seats. One in the South may see rotational seats as discriminatory when powerful Northern states are guaranteed consistent influence as existing permanent members. While a rotational system for incoming members is discriminatory there is little hope that the existing permanent members would forego some of their power in order to create regional seats across the board. Regional hegemonies like Brazil and India have already stated their objections to a rotational seat system". This is problematic since the problem needs to be solved at a regional level.

In the case of Africa what complicates the matter is that a country like Nigeria already sees itself as Africa's best candidate for a seat in the reformed Security Council. As President Obasanjo states, "Nigeria deserves a UN Security Council seat"⁶. He also emphasised the need for the veto to be extended to his country. This pronouncement by Obasanjo limits the scope for negotiation within African states themselves, as Nigeria is unlikely to be flexible and accept being left out if two permanent seats become available for Africa.

In 1993 the General Assembly proposed the formation of an Open-ended Working Group on the question of expansion of the Security Council, but since

⁶ See "Nigeria deserves UN Security Council seat, says Obasanjo".

<http://www.nigeriatoday.com/nigeria_deserves_u.htm> 3/10/2001

its inception the group has made very little progress as far as reforming the Security Council is concerned. The group seems to have difficulties in reconciling the proposals on the table, hence the lack of progress. Indonesia opposes the idea of getting both Japan and Germany into the reformed Security Council for the same reasons already put forward by other countries. Its view is that this will lead to further imbalance within the Security Council, as it already exists now. Indonesia also favours the idea of taking the economic status of the country into consideration when it comes to the allocation of a seat.

Taking the economic status of the country into consideration sounds reasonable, given the fact that the UN needs money to operate, but this will probably limit the chances of many countries to get the Security Council seats, especially the developing ones. Indonesia further proposes that a country's reputation in the region be taken into consideration. Italy subscribes to the idea that economic strength should not necessarily be a determining factor when it comes to the allocation of seats, the reason being that economic strength is not a permanent feature of each and every country. Italy further opposes the question of economic strength, posing the following questions: "What if in the near future, other countries, other States were to become (and some have already become) economically stronger than current permanent members? Would these other States also be entitled to permanent seats because of their economic strength? And would current permanent members with diminished economic power have to give up their seats?"⁷

The above questions still need to be thoroughly debated and a consensus reached on what needs to be done if the situation unfolds the way Italy envisages it. Addressing the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on

⁷ See Ambassador F. Paolo Fulci on the Reform of The Security Council. Point 3 of the Program of Work: Expansion of the Security Council, February 18/19,1999. <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/fulci1.htm>> 3/5/2001.

the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the membership of the Security Council, Ambassador Kastrup, Germany's permanent representative to the UN, pointed out that Germany does favour the idea of enlarging both the permanent and non-permanent membership as this will be a logical step to reform. Kastrup (1999) points out that:

... a total number of 24 seats should strike the necessary balance between enhancing the opportunities for participation and maintaining the efficiency of the Council. An expansion to 20 or 21 seats will not fully exhaust the existing possibilities for obtaining a more balanced and equitable composition of the Council membership. And it will not ensure sufficient additional representation to the developing world⁸.

Contrary to Germany's position that the Security Council be enlarged to 24 seats, Italy believes that the Council should be enlarged to at least 21 seats. Italy served in the Security Council in 1995 and 1996 and her argument is that enlarging the Council to a number more than 21 might make it ineffective given the perpetual disagreements in the decision-making process. Italy maintains that it has been difficult to manage fifteen members, therefore the problem might be aggravated if the council is to be enlarged too much. According to Paolo Fulci (1999), Italy "believes that enlargement – for the time being at least – should not exceed 5-6 seats, for a total of 20-21". Italy favours the idea of guarding "against an excessive enlargement of the Council that would make it unwieldy, inefficient, and therefore ineffective".⁹

Opposition to the Organisation of African Unity's proposal of 26 members by many countries around the world is a serious challenge as it calls for compromise on African states. This proposal of 26 members is unlikely to get support from many countries, since most of them propose either 21 or 24 and

⁸ See Statement by Ambassador Dr Dieter Kastrup, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations to the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council – New York, February 8, 1999.

<http://www.germany-info.org/UN/un_state-02_08_99.htm> 3/5/2001.

⁹ See Ambassador F. Paolo Fulci on the Reform of The Security Council. February 8, 1999.

<<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/fulci1.htm>> 3/5/2001

the powerful permanent members propose 21 seats. "The US supports the granting of permanent seats for Japan and Germany and is prepared to accept three additional permanent seats for developing nations from the regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The U.S. favours regional groups deciding if the seat allocated to their regions would be filled on a rotational basis or be held by a single nation. The overall size of the Council should be limited to a maximum of 20 or 21, in order to ensure that it will continue to function efficiently" (US Department of State, 2000:1).

On the question of veto the United States of America has pledged, in the words of Ambassador Sklar (1999), "to continue to exercise the veto responsibly and appropriately..." and is therefore "firmly opposed to any attempt to restrict or curtail the veto, be it through amendment to the Charter or any other way."¹⁰ The US further maintains that there must be a consensus on the number of countries to add into the Security Council and the veto issue can be debated afterwards. A claim by the US to continue using the veto responsibly and appropriately makes matters difficult and symbolises its reluctance to satisfy a plea by nation states to get rid of the veto. This also leaves nation states with no hope that the US will ever give up the veto.

Even though Russia is sympathetic to Latin America, Africa and Asia in their advocacy for more representation in the Council, it also stands by the idea that the Security Council should not be extended to a number beyond 21. This demands a compromise for Africa on its position that the continent should get two permanent seats. Granovsky (1999) points out that "An important factor for the enhancement of the Security Council's efficiency is to ensure its more balanced and representative make-up. While proceeding firmly from the point

¹⁰ See Statement by Ambassador Richard Sklar, United States Representative to the United Nations for United Nations Reform and Management to the Open Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform on the Veto Issue, March 24, 1999. <http://www.un.int/usa/99_029.htm>. 3/5/2001.

that the enlarged Security Council should not exceed 20-21 members, we confirm our principal position that the major precondition for a just fulfilment of this task is to ensure adequate representation of the Latin America, Africa and Asia in the enlarged Security Council being endowed with status equal to that of other new members of the Security Council.¹¹

Finally, reform of the United Nations Security Council seems more complicated than might appear at first glance. Reconciling the proposals put forward thus far is another challenge, which can lead to the establishment of another commission on reconciliation of such proposals. It is characterised more by setbacks if not stagnation, than progress. While nation states are thinking on how best to reform the Security Council, others are thinking hard on how best to stifle the process by perpetually frustrating every move that might lead to change. There is still too much work to be done, on a regional to continental as well as international level. A solution to the problems at these three levels is a very difficult one to arrive at.

¹¹See Russian Deputy Granovsky Favours Enlargement – 22 June 1999.
<<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/russia.htm>> 3/5/2001.

Chapter Three

Confusion at home, complexity abroad – how negotiable is the way?

3.1. Introduction

There are a lot of things that determine the process of getting the Security Council reformed. It has been highlighted before that the process has opponents on almost all continents. Several countries are presumed to be against reform, Mexico in Latin America, Pakistan in Asia, Egypt and Zimbabwe (coffee club) in Africa, France and Britain in Europe, etc. This makes matters complex enough – more so because the US, which is supposed to play a major role in speeding up the process, tends to ignore or does not seem to acknowledge the urgency of the matter.

The purpose of reforming the Security Council is to keep pace with the way the world has changed since the United Nations was formed. The Cold War has ended; a diplomatic struggle between the West and the East does not threaten international peace as it used to immediately after World War II. It is presumed that states are increasingly being driven by a common goal, i.e. striving for democracy.

All in all international relations are conducted differently at the moment and states need to adjust to such changes. With regard to South Africa the problem can perhaps be located in its ambiguous foreign policy and the procrastination by cabinet in giving the Foreign Affairs department the green light to express South Africa's quest for permanent membership. This delays some moves towards achieving the goal, which has to do with, among other things, canvassing support for a permanent seat. It is important to try and get clarity on South Africa's foreign policy so as to be able to use it as a tool for analysis if the need arises.

This chapter aims, amongst other things, to sketch a brief picture of South Africa's foreign policy. It also suggests some ideas on how to approach the question of reform and some proposals on the way that the Charter can be amended. It must be noted that reform does not only have to do with increasing the number of members, but also changing the working methods of the Security Council, which might require an amendment of the Charter. The chapter ends by further proposing some working methods that could be followed by the Security Council in executing its duties. This will perhaps leave many member states satisfied, since they perpetually complain about marginalisation in the decision-making process.

3.1.1. A brief outline of South Africa's foreign policy

A lot of things have been said about the nature of South Africa's foreign policy. The strategic and tactical principles guiding South Africa's foreign policy are not yet clear. First, it is important to understand that South Africa (if one is to count from the period 1994 until 2001) has not been in the international arena for long. Its foreign policy is still an unfolding phenomenon. It is often believed that South Africa's policy is ambiguous, if not at a crossroads. From what the main players in policy formulation and implementation said thus far, one can see that South Africa's foreign policy still has a lot of things to achieve. This gives rise to the question whether they will be achieved or not. Another question, which comes to mind, is whether there are plans to achieve such objectives. What strategic and tactical moves are being implemented is a question that still needs to be answered. The scope for South Africa now seems to be too broad.

Divergent views on the aims and objectives of South Africa's foreign policy are as follows. "Thabo Mbeki has declared that South Africa's primary foreign policy ambition is to secure the conditions necessary for an 'African Renaissance' through 'the establishment of genuine and stable democracies in Africa, from which systems of governance will flourish'" (Mills, 1999c: 10). This

seems to be a very great ambition indeed. Foreign policy formulation and implementation in South Africa are more complex than might appear at first glance. Perhaps Vale (1998:10) was right to say that in the Mandela era "there have been no real ideas in foreign policy from South Africa's government". This also seems to be the case in the Mbeki era.

The former Foreign Affairs Director-General, Jackie Selebi, stated the following as the essence of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa, he said, "is a key supporter of a rules-based international system...[enabling] the weak to have the same voice as the powerful, hence Pretoria's focus on the multilateral milieu" (cited in Mills, 1999c: 8). From Selebi's statement one can see that it is not easy to escape the fact that the scope is too broad for South Africa.

A lot of issues that constitute what can now be called South Africa's foreign policy need to be debated and a point of departure needs to be established on what needs to be prioritised. For now a lot of issues are at stake and the moves are not yet clear. The process of getting a point of departure is delayed by procrastination, which in turn makes an escape from ambiguity difficult. Van Wyk (1999:233) states that "...there should be parliamentary debate on broad foreign policy issues such as South Africa's role in the restructuring of the UN Security Council..."

The complex nature of the process and the ambiguous nature of the policy was further reflected in Selebi (1999:209), when he says that " ... we do not yet have enough knowledge and research about how the new world order may develop and which policy options would steer it in a positive or in negative direction". From what Selebi points out it is easy to detect that a point of departure has not yet been established and a lot about the nature of the international system still need to be learned by the main players in foreign policy formulation and implementation.

South Africa's position as a middle power and a bridge between the North and the South makes its assignment more difficult. There is a feeling in academic circles that South Africa's foreign policy aims and the changes South Africa wants to make in the international system might not be achieved, given the pressures under which South Africa is operating. There is also a feeling that a country like South Africa will not do much to transform the international system, but is likely to end up being a conveyor belt for existing international norms.

It is in most cases difficult to come up with a 'sealed package' of foreign policy, since foreign policy need to react to the policy 'winds' blowing across the globe. As the main players in foreign policy formulation and implementation put it, "foreign policy is a multidimensional set of policies, objectives, principles, strategies and plans which cannot easily be packaged into a neatly described 'formula'. It is also not always practical to distinguish between aspirations, general objectives and underlying philosophy".¹

Under these circumstances, it is fair to agree with Mayall (1999:80), who says, "Most countries make up their foreign policy as they go along, mainly because though their interests may remain constant, the circumstances to which they must react are not". South Africa's foreign policy principles and cornerstones as outlined by former Foreign Minister, Mr Alfred Nzo, former President Nelson Mandela and current Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, encapsulate the following:

- a commitment to the promotion of human rights;
- a commitment to the promotion of democracy;
- a commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations;

¹ See South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document. Department of Foreign Affairs. <<http://www.gov.za/greenpaper/1996/foraf1.htm#D>>. 14 August 2000.

- a commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed-upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts;
- a commitment to the interests of Africa in World Affairs; and
- exercising regular choices between available options in the international arena based on South Africa's interests and means is a part of the foreign policy process.

Furthermore South Africa believes that the United Nations should be reformed and strengthened to enable it to deal with matters such as global economic and environmental challenges and the achievement of sustainable development. South Africa should deal with African partners as equals and avoid all hegemonic ambitions. A narrow, short-term approach aimed at promoting self-interest must be avoided.² South Africa will co-operate with all other countries in shaping and defining the new world order and promoting multilateral co-operation in the international community. South Africa should remain actively engaged in efforts to secure world-wide peace, promote disarmament, prevent genocide and restrict proliferation.³

Some of the statements made above are debatable. Perhaps Taylor's (1999:183) statement that "Pretoria's foreign policy cannot be reduced to a simplistic equation" is worth reaffirming. However, the aim here is not to question South Africa's foreign policy, but to give a picture of how complex the situation can be for South Africa in the not-so-friendly, anarchical and sometimes chaotic international system. South Africa has countless aims, hence it is necessary to reaffirm that its scope is too broad and needs to be narrowed. The question

² See South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document. Department of Foreign Affairs. <<http://www.gov.za/greenpaper/1996/foraf1.htm#D>>.14 August 2000.

³ See South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document. Department of Foreign Affairs. <<http://www.gov.za/greenpaper/1996/foraf1.htm#D>>.14 August 2000.

about whether reforming the Security Council is possible in the near future needs to be considered carefully so that the country can avoid wasting resources on an impossible mission.

If that is the case how long will it take for South Africa to get the mission accomplished? Furthermore if that is the case, where do we start if we need to narrow our scope. "Foreign policy is often argued within a context of competing and often mutually exclusive perspectives – for example, pragmatic demands that ties with Europe and North America ought to be paramount, set against socialist and idealist demands that policy ought to be ethical, solidarist and Afro-centric" (Evans, 1999:68).

South Africa's foreign policy formulation process is faced with the challenge of reconciling socialist with liberal ideas. Perhaps Vale (1998:11) is right in his statement that South Africa has not yet been successful in "developing a coherent and purposeful foreign policy". In the implementation of its ambiguously defined foreign policy, South Africa is sometimes faced with the challenge of deciding whom to establish ties with and seeing who will be hurt in that process. The process sometimes demand cutting diplomatic ties with one country in favour of the other(s), as happened in the case of Taiwan and the Peoples Republic of China. Cutting ties with a particular country always meet with severe criticism both inside and outside the country.

Mills (1999a: 89) points out that "... the Republic has been somewhat reluctant to define national interests and stamp these on its relations with its partners in the developing world, many of which have sought to retain political leverage by highlighting their role in the anti-apartheid struggle. In its relations with the 14 member-states of the Southern African Development Community, this has led to a perception in government that South Africa 'was damned if it did, and damned if it didn't. Pretoria has (unsurprisingly) often been expected to take the policy lead in the region, but in turn has been singled out for criticism over

its 'hegemonic' behaviour". From what Mills (1999a) posits, it is easy to conclude that the task of formulating and implementing foreign policy is a mammoth one. The process is never immune from criticism and not all actors will be satisfied with the way policy is formulated and implemented. This give rise to the need for well-engineered moves so as to leave as many satisfied and as few dissatisfied as possible.

It is important that policy makers in South Africa realise that South Africa's limited resources cannot permit it to do all things at the same time; therefore the scope shouldn't be too broad. The constraints emerging middle powers might come across in the international system have been outlined in several academic papers. South Africa as an emerging middle power might find it difficult to negotiate its way through such constraints. This perhaps is what informs Nel *et al.* (2001:1) to maintain that South Africa is "punching above its weight" by playing a middle power role.

Whether South Africa is punching above its weight or not, the fact of the matter here is that some tasks need to be done, and the question now is how do we get them done. Getting the Security Council reformed happens to be one of them. We have managed to sketch a picture of South Africa's foreign policy thus far. What still needs to be seen is how South Africa navigates the 'high seas' of international diplomacy with its not entirely coherent foreign policy.

We are still confronted with the question of how the Security Council can be reformed. Reform still remains the issue at stake. The Council is still not an accurate reflection of the current distribution of power. The fact that the way the Security Council is structured at the moment is not an accurate reflection of the current distribution of power has been emphasised in almost every piece of literature on the reform of the Council. Concerns have been raised and raised again. The stakes have been made clear, now the moves have to follow.

3.1.2. Ideas on how the reform of the UN Security Council should occur

The question of what form should reform take is tricky to deal with since it means becoming unpopular with some of the permanent members. The plea to reform the Security Council is based on the belief that “the more representative the Council, the more legitimate its actions will seem and the easier it will be to build consensus and have its actions carried out” (Field, 1998:16). The main problems that have arisen thus far include, among others, the fact that the USA, Britain and France oppose an enlargement of the Security Council that exceeds 23. The permanent members refuse any extension of veto powers or any limitation, the latter being the OAU’s demand. Britain and France are not interested in the reformat process; their perception is that the process is likely to bring an end to their permanent positions in the Council.

A combination of a lack of interest in empowering other countries and the conservative nature of the US Congress is also a stumbling block to the process of reform. Leigh-Phippard (1997) suggests a number of ways in which the Council can be reformed. If countries, especially the permanent five, can agree with these suggestions, we are likely to see a reformed Security Council. The proposals include:

- The removal of the veto power;
- the introduction of a two-tier structure of permanent membership;
- amendment of the UN Charter to allow immediate re-election of non-permanent members;
- the addition of new permanent members (possibly with reformed voting arrangements);
- the redistribution of the existing permanent seats.⁴

⁴ See Leigh Phippard, H (1997: 422) “Remaking the Security Council: The Options” in *Documents on Reform of the United Nations*. Taylor, P.Daws,S. and Adamczick-Gerteis,U.(eds).England: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd.

These are some of the most important aspects on reform and the permanent five are diametrically opposed to these proposals. Furthermore, the introduction of a two-tier structure of permanent membership, the addition of new permanent members (possibly with reformed voting arrangements), as well as the redistribution in the existing permanent seats, as proposed by Leigh-Phippard (1997) above, are similar to the ideas put forward by different commissions thus far. These proposals are a challenge to both the South and the North. The North resists change and the South pushes for change.

It has been pointed out that there is no provision for a veto in the Charter, meaning that a resolution by the Permanent Five to give themselves a veto has brought more harm than good to the international community as has been shown by the United Nations' failure to maintain peace globally. This compels South Africa to make the international community conscious of the matter and insist on the need to go back to the drawing board. In line with the view expressed above, Petrie (1996:66) correctly points out that "brief but substantive consideration of the Charter, then, is the starting point to review future options for improvement".

Furthermore, there is a need for the Charter to be taken seriously and any decision that is in conflict with it must not be implemented. Some activities have been carried out in the name of the veto – something not agreed upon by all the member states – hence the need for a fresh look at the veto. "The powers entrusted to the Security Council and the voting procedures for decision-making – important as they are – are not well understood. Voting in the Security Council is complex. Although there are ten non-permanent members of the Security Council, and any seven of them could block a decision sought by all five permanent members, that has not happened. In fact, Security Council decisions have been blocked only by permanent members exercising their veto authority. Broadly depicted in negative terms over the years, the veto probably deserves a fresh look" (Petrie, 1996:67). It is in this light that South Africa will

need to make the international community, and the permanent five in particular, conscious that the resolution on the veto (i.e. giving this power to a few countries) was not a solution to the challenge of maintaining lasting peace, the challenge that the world is facing at the moment.

The international community needs to be made aware of the need to vehemently oppose the veto and to call for the removal of such a privilege. Relations between states in the international system are sometimes characterised by unfairness. If states are to consider the veto carefully, they can agree that the veto multiplies problems more than reduces them. The veto is one source of misunderstanding between states. It has also failed to keep the permanent five united. Perhaps Leigh-Phippard (1997:423) is right in maintaining that "Its eradication could conceivably contribute to the effectiveness of the Council by ensuring that no permanent member could block a decision supported by a majority of the Council"

At the moment the veto protects the self-interest of the United States and its few friends; therefore the veto does not help much in getting the problem of instability in the international system solved. It only helps to divert the Council's attention. The process of getting the Security Council reformed calls for an amendment of the Charter, something the permanent members do not want to consider. Their opposition is informed by a fear that the 'world constitution' will be drawn in such a way that it will help eliminate some form of unfairness.

Even though Leigh-Phippard's proposal that the Charter be amended is not a very popular one amongst the permanent members, the fact of the matter here is that it is the better way to go. The veto, according to Leigh-Phippard (1997:423), "is not only the symbol of the privileged position of the permanent members but also the constitutional weapon by which they defend that position". Many steps taken by the United Nations had advantages and

disadvantages. The aim here is to maximise the advantages and minimise the disadvantages. The removal of the veto is seen as likely to make some members lose interest in the UNO. If the US, for example, happens to lose interest in the UNO, this could have a negative impact on the organisation, especially in financial terms. To deal with this financial implication is also a mammoth task.

While scholars like Leigh-Phippard (1997:426) maintain that a geographically equitable permanent membership “is unlikely to be achievable”; it can be argued that geographically equitable representation can be achieved (even though difficult) under certain conditions. Geographically equitable permanent membership can be achieved only if statesmen – especially those heading the states that are permanent members – focus more on what is achievable than on what they desire. Although Leigh-Phippard’s ideas on Security Council reform deserves credit, her usage of the word “effectiveness” still needs to be debated further. If we are to agree that the Council’s effectiveness is to be measured by its ability to foresee and curb the possibilities of intra- and inter-state conflict, and further bring peace in a speedy manner where the situation is already chaotic, then Leigh-Phippard’s (1997) claim that the Security Council is effective not tenable.

What needs to be emphasised is that the permanent five’s co-operation is a fundamental if not a determining factor. The major deadlock in the process of reforming the Security Council is that those who formulate policies nationally focus more on what is desirable and refuse to focus more on what is achievable and what is likely to leave the majority satisfied. Permanent members constantly make the world believe that reforming the Security Council is an impossible mission.

It is fair at the moment to maintain that the Security Council is “effective.” The level of “effectiveness” of the Council is the bone of contention when it comes to reforming the Council. Some statesmen and academics maintain that the

effectiveness of the Council will be compromised if changes are to be made to the permanent structure. It is important to realise that the effectiveness of the Council in the 21st century must be measured by its successes in executing popular and not unpopular decisions and the ability to come with a sound and acceptable programme of action.

Germany and Japan are said to be the pillars of the UN in terms of finances. One is not arguing for the inclusion of Germany and Japan in the Council, but if they are said to be the pillars of the UN in terms of finance, this means the removal of Britain and France, and their replacement with Germany and Japan, is the process that will not affect its effectiveness if the UNSC is to be declared effective at the moment. Germany and Japan can be more important pieces in the chess game that is played by statesmen. Britain and France are at the moment seen as pawns in the game, the less important pieces on the world chessboard. We have looked into almost all the matters (complicated) relating to the reform of the Security Council. The question of how reform can be achieved in practice is still with us; what still needs to be done is the question that needs to be addressed.

Going back to the points made before on what form reform should take, it will be logical for South Africa to make nations aware of the urgent need for an amendment of the Charter. A reform of the Security Council calls for an amendment of the Charter. As per directive from Articles 108 and 109, the Charter can be amended if the required number of member states so wish. The current situation calls for permanent members to realise that they are only favoured by the present state of international politics and therefore they cannot maintain their positions eternally. International politics will not evolve in their favour forever; therefore they need to reconsider the matter seriously.

It is important to realise that a quest by nations for a reformed Council gives rise to a race for permanent positions and only if the developing countries (who

happen to be the most concerned about the status quo) can co-operate and put pressure on the developed countries will we see a reformed Security Council. Unity from below is very important so that evolution, or revolution if necessary, can be achieved. It is very clear at the moment that any reform – which means interfering with the permanent structure – will be opposed. It will be wise for South Africa to go the long route proposed by Leigh-Phippard (1997:428) for the reform process, which is “incremental in order to ensure the confidence of both the permanent membership and the wider UN membership in its utility”. This is one change that can be achieved perhaps without any serious opposition.

The ultimate aim of getting the Council reformed includes, among other things, reducing the dominance of the Western industrialised world over the Security Council; therefore “if reform is to include the replacement of one or more of the current permanent members, the remaining members will need to believe that the replacement of their colleagues will not seriously affect the permanent member cooperation that currently exists and will not pose a significant challenge to their individual interests” (Leigh-Phippard, 1997:428). Furthermore, the “non-aligned countries will need to be satisfied that a reformed Security Council will meet their security needs ... more effectively” (Leigh-Phippard, 1997:429).

It is important to note that the reform of the Security Council might have to include, among other things, enlargement. In this situation the present structure of fifteen members will have to be enlarged to a number agreed upon by member states. As it has been indicated in the previous chapters, there have been several proposals with regard to the number of members to be included in the UNSC. “In deciding how great the enlargement should be, two sets of considerations come into play. The first concerns the need for a Council, which are both large enough to be representative of the entire UN membership and small enough to function smoothly. The second concerns the gap between

political realities and what can be called the 'democratic ideal'. The goal is to strike an appropriate balance between two sets of considerations, thus making for an effective Council – whose decisions are timely, responsive to the demands of a crisis, capable of implementation and widely supported by the international community" (International Peace Academy and the Stanley Foundation, 1994:434).

The veto is one issue at stake, but it is an issue that is likely to give rise to intense political debate in the twenty-first century. It is very clear that the permanent members are diametrically opposed to any form of veto removal. In this situation, even though there is a strong opposition to the idea of extending the veto to the potential permanent members, it will symbolise progress to accept an offer for permanent membership without a veto and push for veto removal when one is already in the system. This situation is a further challenge to the veto-wielding states to reconsider the veto and not to use it as a means to an end, since the ends are always in favour of the privileged few.

Accepting an offer for permanent membership without the veto and negotiating for one, if need be, while in the system is something achievable, hence our emphasis on the need to first focus on what is achievable. It will also be possible to push others out of the permanent members camp if one is already in the same camp with them. It is highly possible to defeat someone when you have already gained access to his or her territory rather than fighting from a distance. The aim here is to get the nucleus of the Security Council changed and it is only if one is within that a push for a change can be effective.

It is important to realise that this is a process and is likely to take more time, as it has already taken years since the first day of the debate on reform. It is very difficult to convince statesmen to accede to your demands, especially if doing so means a loss on their side. Therefore South Africa must avoid coming with radical proposals that are likely to give rise to resistance from the outset. This is

a diplomatic struggle where moves will have to be well engineered. Any mistake is likely to put South Africa in a disadvantageous position for a long period. It is important to realise that a democratic procedure on the matter is unlikely to be followed, since the international system is not a democratic one. There is also no central authority to enforce rules; therefore South Africa will have to sharpen its diplomatic skills and avoid unnecessary blunders.

There have been, and there will still be, several rounds of negotiations on the matter; it is not just a matter that can be settled in one day. Even though the aim of each and every negotiator is to emerge victoriously in all the rounds of negotiations, that is not always possible; therefore South Africa should be flexible where flexibility will not be too costly to her, so that other countries can see the reason for being flexible in the next round.

3.1.3. Proposals on how the Charter can be amended

States need to be made conscious of the fact that changing the Charter is an urgent matter, which needs to be attended to without any delay. Bailey and Daws (1998:379) point out that “many of the provisions of the Charter are unsatisfactory diplomatic compromises...” It has been made clear earlier in this chapter that any changes in the Security Council will demand an amendment of the Charter as it is to serve as a very important guiding instrument in the twenty-first century and centuries to come. Bailey & Daws (1998:380) further point out that “the principal challenge is not to draft a better Charter: it is to make better use of the Charter we have”. Even though one subscribes to the idea of a better usage of the Charter, one cherishes the idea of deleting and adding new articles in the Charter since the present is more of unsatisfactory compromises if one is to refer to the earlier statement made by Bailey and Daws (1998).

Without amending the Charter, there are ways of building on the recent pattern of non-use of the veto. In accordance with article 27 of the Charter, procedural

matters are not subject to the veto. Adhering to that rule more strictly and expanding the range of matters, which the Council treats as procedural, would be one way of restricting the use of the veto. A case can be made that a decision to establish a subcommittee under Article 29 to carry out an investigation or inquiry is a procedural decision not subject to the veto. In the long term more substantive limitation to the veto could be considered. Those supporting tighter limitations suggest that a Charter amendment might focus on issues such as the following:

- non-application of the veto to election of the Secretary General;
- non-application of the veto to Chapter VI action by the Council, when no Chapter VII action is contemplated nor vital national interest at stake;
- requiring the negative votes of more than one veto power to block an action;
- granting a 'regional veto', by which negative votes from all members from a given region would constitute a veto;
- a system of weighted voting, modelled on the practice of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Amendment of the Charter is very important because the Charter is seen more as a tool of the victors than a document of the people, as proclaimed in its preamble. No one should act as a master of the earth; increasing the legitimacy of the UN and the Security Council in particular should be attempted. Bailey and Daws' (1998:381) point out:

The Charter should not be treated as if it were holy writ. It was devised during the Second World War in a situation very different from the present. Decolonisation was but a dream. The preamble to the Charter affirmed 'faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women of all nations large and small...' UN organs have set standards to achieve these goals, but the states of which the UN is composed have made minimal progress in changing aspirations into reality.

3.1.4. How the Security Council should conduct its affairs (working methods)

It has been stated that reforming of the Security Council is not only about increasing the number of members. It is also about how the Council should

work. The International Peace Academy and The Stanley Foundation (1997) proposed the following to improve the way the Security Council works:

- Regional briefings. To improve a two-way flow of information between the Security Council and the general UN membership, non-permanent members should hold regular briefings sessions for their respective regional groups. While these consultations now occur in some regions, they tend to be ad hoc and to depend on the personal initiatives of sitting Council members. The practice should be institutionalised for all regional groups.
- Consultation with specially affected countries. Countries likely to be especially affected by measures under consideration in the Security Council could be given the opportunity to participate in informal consultations so that they can directly raise their concerns with Council members.
- In camera hearings. In addition to the informal consultations, we suggest that the Security Council make it a practice to schedule in camera hearings, early in its deliberations, before making final decisions on important questions. The hearings would be open to any state wishing to express substantive views on important.⁵

It has been made clear on several occasions that reforming the Security Council cannot be done or achieved overnight. This needs time and patience on the side of South Africa. South Africa must be prepared to adopt a piecemeal strategy of change in relation to the Council. Any revolutionary approach to the process

⁵ See International Peace Academy and the Stanley Foundation, (1997) "Reform of the Security Council: Memorandum submitted to the President of the UN General Assembly, 20 May 1994" in *Documents on Reform of the Reform of the United Nations*. Taylor, P. Daws, S. and Adamczick-Gerteis, U. (eds). England: Dartmouth Publishing Company Limited.

triggers strong resistance to change, especially by the permanent members; hence the emphasis on focusing on what is achievable.

Getting the Security Council reformed is a negotiated process, which involves guarding national interests. Getting or retaining a seat (especially a permanent seat) in the Council is a matter of national interest; therefore statesmen negotiate while considering the impact of such negotiations at home. To sustain themselves politically at home, they can choose to be difficult and refuse to surrender a permanent seat if one seat needs to be surrendered. This is one side of the complex process – hence the need to avoid a sweeping approach to the process. The United States, according to Hindell (1992:32), “is opposed to holding a review conference to revise the Charter for fear that somehow it would do more harm than good.” This perhaps explains why the permanent five pretend not to see the urgency of reform and the need to amend the Charter.

The amendment of the Charter is likely to dismantle the powers of some states; new rules of procedure will have to be adopted and be adhered to. The scenario that is being developed in this situation is disturbing to the US and that is why she tends to talk about the possibilities of “more harm than good” as indicated by Hindell (1992) above than to talk about the possibilities of more good than harm. On the question of veto Hindell (1992:32) is of the opinion that “it should take the votes of three permanent members to quash a majority decision. Such a reform would give the Council more freedom of action and the ability to censure or even act against one of the permanent members”

There is a need for the issue of reform to gather momentum so as to be considered seriously by the permanent members. “The UN’s constitutional structure guarantees a plethora of actors with de facto if not de jure power. Hence any reform proposal will have to have something to please most everyone, as well as the best satirical tradition, something to offend most

everyone" (Russet, 1996:269). Satisfying everyone is impossible if states are to achieve their aim of reforming the Security Council; hence a need for compromise by statesmen. Another issue, which is at stake at the moment, is that of the rotation of seats. Some countries are totally against the idea of rotating seats, while others tend to favour the idea of rotation of seats. The disadvantage of rotating seats is that it will take time before other countries get a seat. In the case of Africa, with 53 states, rotating two seats will mean waiting for a long time before each and every country can get its chance.

The OAU's position on the reform of the Security Council met with no opposition from Egypt and Nigeria. What is left at the moment is for South Africa to declare its position on the matter and deal with the repercussions. What needs to be emphasised at the moment is that careful diplomacy and hard work are very important when it comes to South Africa securing a seat in the reformed Security Council. Sipho Pityana, Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, states that "the cabinet has not yet deliberated or taken a decision on South Africa's possible candidature for the Council"⁶. Finally, whether the US and its allies accept the proposals put forward thus far on the reform of the UN Security Council or not, it is fair to conclude that most of them merit attention.

⁶ Sipho Pityana cited in *Pretoria News*, 25 July 2000.

Chapter Four

South Africa's double-bridge role, trying the somewhat difficult if not the impossible

4.1. Introduction

The prospect of reform of the United Nations Security Council brought challenges not only to the permanent five but also to Asian, Latin American and African countries. It is one of the most challenging tasks member states are facing at the dawn of the 21st century. The idea behind the reform of the Security Council is to ensure that each continent gets representation in the reformed Security Council. African countries are faced with a challenge to negotiate a criterion that is going to be used to determine who goes to the reformed Security Council on behalf of Africa. They are also faced with a challenge to compromise their position (if need be) that the Security Council should be extended to 26 members, since other countries in different regions do not favour the idea.

As expressed in the words of the former Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa "would want to become a permanent member of the Security Council" (Selebi, 1998:15). The issue here is to get African countries to reconcile their opinions and to finally get Africa's position on the matter. This is a challenge to Africa and South Africa in particular since the reform of the Security Council is a highly political issue. Lack of unity among African states needs to be avoided, since this is likely to mark the beginning of stagnation in the process.

The process of the reform of the Security Council raises problems both for the developed and the developing countries. In the developed world the problem lies with the permanent members. In the developing world the question is: who is going there, given the antagonism between states in different regions? Potential permanent members in the Asian region have their own standpoints,

which are not easy to reconcile. In Africa, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and others are said to be eligible for permanent seats, therefore one or two of them will perhaps represent Africa in a reformed Security Council.

The challenge facing South Africa at the moment is to calculate its moves very well and gather enough support from its African counterparts if it really wants to secure a seat in the reformed Security Council. Nigeria has expressed its interest in getting a seat in the reformed Security Council. The challenge will now be to decide who goes and what criteria are being used to determine this. Coming up with a final position (i.e. Africa's position on reform) and deciding who goes there on behalf of Africa are the challenges facing the African continent. This chapter aims, amongst other things, to outline the Organisation of African Unity's position on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. It further aims at sketching a picture of the state of affairs (the positions of the main contenders) in Africa and the domestic problems South Africa is faced with at the moment (i.e. opposition to the states' moves by opposition parties). It will highlight possible outcomes.

4.2. The Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) position on reform of the Security Council

The Organisation for African Unity's position is very clear. It was first articulated and affirmed at the 1994 OAU Summit in Tunis. It was further reaffirmed in Harare (Zimbabwe) in 1997 and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in 1998. Africa, according to the OAU, should get at least two rotating permanent seats in the reformed Security Council.

Furthermore, Africa should get three non-permanent seats in the reformed Security Council. This position seems to be accepted by most African states, since no country has expressed dissatisfaction with the move thus far. This perhaps might be opposed at the next OAU summit to be held in Lusaka

(Zambia, July 2001), but for now it still stands. Contrary to the ideas of the USA, Italy and Canada “the OAU’s position is that there should be an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories to bring the total number of members to no less than 26” (Field, 1998:17).

4.3. South Africa’s position on the enlargement of the UN Security Council

South Africa does favour the idea of reforming the Security Council as stated by former President Nelson Mandela (1998)¹, former Foreign Minister, the late Alfred Nzo(1995)² and the former Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Jackie Selebi (1998)³, the current president, Thabo Mbeki (1995c)⁴ and Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (1999)⁵ on different national and international platforms.

South Africa’s position is informed by a concern that the world agenda is determined exclusively by a few countries who perpetually exclude the majority. Mbeki (1997) points out that “there have to be permanent members of the Security Council coming out of the Third World with the same status as any other permanent member”.

Some changes were made in 1999 to the South African Cabinet. South Africa saw Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma taking over as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Zuma herself never expressed new ideas and strategies on the matter

¹ Address at the 53rd UN General Assembly. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 6 Number 1, Summer 1998.

² Statement by HE Mr Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, in the general debate of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Friday, October 1995. (<http://www.gov.za>)

³ Interview with Jackie Selebi: in *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 3(3) December 1998. Foundation for Global Dialogue.

⁴ Statement by Deputy President Mbeki. United Nations at 50, University of Melbourne, Australia, 28 April 1995. (<http://www.gov.za>)

⁵ An address by Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr N.C. Zuma to the South African Institute of International Affairs, 1 November 1999. Department of Foreign Affairs, (<http://www.gov.za>)

of South Africa's eventual accession to the United Nations Security Council's permanent position. Addressing the South African Institute of International Affairs, on the 1st November 1999, Dr Dlamini-Zuma pointed out that:

We shall continue to pay adequate attention to the imperative need for the reform and the democratisation of the UN Security Council. The reform of the multilateral institutions, including the UN and Bretton Woods institutions, in order to enhance the role and voice of developing countries in global decision making processes shall continue to enjoy our firm support (Dlamini - Zuma: 1999)

Whether this issue is high on South Africa's agenda at the moment is not yet clear. Asked whether South Africa wanted a permanent seat on the Security Council, Minister Zuma (1999:10) stated that "there hasn't been a concerted government cabinet decision on this matter". Expressing similar sentiments Pahad, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that:

the reconstruction of the United Nations must not simply be seen as an issue of membership of the Security Council. We would like to believe in 'new international relations' environment. We want to work towards transforming the United Nations, not to become an instrument of any major power, but to become involved in all the relevant issues, like the South-to-South relations, development, environment, and gender issue and other related matters. Our view of the UN is a broader and more holistic one. We believe that our membership of the UN, as part of Africa, can make a good contribution to transforming the UN to becoming an effective vehicle for the poor and the down trodden (cited in Solomon, 1996:73).

According to Mills (1999b: 380), "Pretoria has followed the line taken by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The OAU proposes that Africa be given two permanent seats to be rotated among a mandated and select group of states, plus extra non-permanent seats". Pahad points out that South Africa favours the idea of the reform of the United Nations. He points out that South Africa "believes that membership needs to be representative of a changed world and that there can be no qualified veto rights" (Pahad cited in *Global Dialogue*, 1998:22).

South Africa is said to have deployed staff in New York to participate in the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council reform. The question which still needs to be answered by the Department of Foreign Affairs is why it should deploy a team in New York when there was never a cabinet decision on the matter. Whose mandate is the group carrying out at

the moment is a critical question at this stage. South Africa has expressed its concern about the state of affairs in the Security Council, but it never came up with a unique plan on the allocation of both the permanent and non-permanent seats.

It is still not very clear whether South Africa will continue supporting the OAU's position or whether it might differ from it at the next OAU summit. Fabricius (1999:1) claims that "the department is seeking cabinet approval to start campaigning to reverse the official Organization of African Unity (OAU)'s position that Africa should hold two rotating seats on the Security Council if it is expanded". Whether this is true or not still remains to be seen, but this can be a major setback in the process since South Africa is likely to come with its own structure, which is unlikely to be accepted on the African continent, thus making South Africa unpopular and the task more difficult.

From what we have heard from policy makers thus far, there seems to be no change in South Africa's position on the matter. It still supports the OAU's position of expanding the Council to 26 members and the rotational seat system. South Africa is at the moment preoccupied with the number of seats that will be available and not with the working methods. It is important to take into consideration the fact that reforming the Security Council is not only about decreasing or enlarging the number of both permanent and non-permanent members.

Enlargement is part of the package, therefore South Africa needs to make its position clear on other aspects of reform, such as working methods and the future of the veto. "Its position on the veto has been that it should either be abolished in a new Security Council or extended to incoming members" (Field, 1998:16). The idea of abolishing the veto is strongly opposed by the permanent members. From what Field (1998) says, one can see that South

Africa is still undecided on whether the veto should be abolished or not, hence there is a need for clarity on the matter.

The fact that South Africa never put a clear proposal forward compels it to adopt the OAU's position, since South Africa is a member of the organisation. The OAU suggests "two permanent and five non-permanent seats for Africa, enabling influential African states to share the burden of permanent membership through rotation" (Field, 1998: 18). Given its position in the NAM (Chair) and being the biggest financial contributor to the United Nations Organisation from Africa, and also given the activities it perform within the body (serving in almost all committees at the United Nations), South Africa stands a chance of being given a hearing by the United Nations on the matter.

South Africa has a bigger role to play in this process, but it also has its own domestic constraints in this matter. With regard to South Africa getting permanent membership, finance can be a constraint, hence the need for a rotational permanent seat. South Africa should insist on a periodical review of the size and the composition of the Security Council, because some states tend to be less effective in the Council – hence a need for their replacement.

It has been pointed out that the process of getting the Security Council reformed has opponents both at continental and international level. With regard to contesting a permanent seat for itself, Mills (1999b: 381) points out that "South Africa may well find itself up against other African states, notably a democratic Nigeria, if it decides to contest a permanent (and sole) African seat". South Africa, according to the current Foreign Affairs Director-General "is not preoccupied with getting a permanent seat on an enlarged United

Nations (UN) Security Council, but is concentrating on moves to transform the council to meet the challenges of the new century”⁶

Even though South Africa claims not to be preoccupied with getting a seat in an enlarged Security Council, Mills (1999b: 381) outlines reasons why South Africa would want a permanent seat:

South Africa is committed to the extension of democracy to the rest of the continent and wants the world to take Africa seriously, then it needs to shoulder such a responsibility... In reality, Pretoria would want a permanent seat to enhance its importance – to be among the ‘big guys’ – and so gain prestige for itself at home and abroad. It certainly would assist African states if their concerns were better represented in the UN. Even with the veto power limited to UN enforcement actions, an African permanent seat could mean less lip service and more real action to intervene in African conflict situations, putting developing regions on a par with areas where the West has direct interests.

South Africa’s position on the matter (even though reflecting a broad ambition) is understandable and its African counterparts also give the reasons it tends to give on why they also want a permanent seat in the Security Council. What is most challenging at the moment is to get support from African countries. South Africa is faced with a challenge to overcome the “just another country” syndrome, as described by Vale and Taylor (1999).

Barber (1998:335) point out that “... there are limits to South Africa’s continental leadership role. Uncertainty exists about whether South Africa has the financial and personnel resources to maintain such a role...” The question of development and reduction of poverty has always been highlighted as the one that South Africa should concentrate on rather than channelling its limited resources to international assignments.

The fact that the government is still faced with many challenges domestically, which include unemployment and the uneven distribution of income, gives rise to questions as to why the government is determined to channel resources

⁶ Siphon Pityana cited in *Business Day* 25 July 2000. SA ‘working on revamp of UN council.’

to missions abroad instead of channelling them to domestic problems. This perhaps symbolises a problem when it comes to prioritising. Perhaps South Africa should become more introspective and decide if it can make a meaningful change in the international system – or has it slowly succumbed to *realpolitik* and the “business of nations”.

Furthermore, the question as to whether South Africa will be able to fully execute the duties given to it – most of them very demanding both in terms of finance and manpower – should be reconsidered by those in the frontline of foreign policy-making and implementation. Perhaps it might be appropriate to consider concentrating on a “less glamorous but more effective role in international society” as Taylor (1997:5) advises us. South Africa is faced with challenges both at home and in the region as well as on the whole continent at large; therefore the scope of the UN challenge might not be manageable.

Having realised the disadvantages of speaking out openly on whether they want a permanent seat in the reformed Security Council or not, key African states – South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria – now claim not to be preoccupied with getting a seat in the reformed Security Council. Perhaps it might not be politically wise for a country to speak out openly about its intentions in this matter.

Even though open criticism by the main contenders on the minimal revelations made by South Africa on its position has not been expressed thus far, Kornegay (1999:61) points out that “Relations between South Africa and Egypt are not nearly as close as they could be, though there are signs that this could be changing. Further, Egypt’s profile in Africa has never been as high as it was during the heyday of Gamal Abdel Nasser’s assertion of a dual pan-African and pan-Arab role for Cairo”. It is in the light of this that Pretoria

probably cannot bank on Cairo's support when it comes to running for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

To ensure success in this mission (Security Council reform) there must be unity amongst the developing countries so as to put pressure on the developed countries, especially the permanent five. The task of uniting the developing countries on this matter is a very difficult one for South Africa. South Africa is the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement and within the Non-Aligned Movement there are countries aligned to the 'coffee club' – a group of countries said to be against the reform of the UN Security Council, simply because they are not on good terms with potential permanent members.

It is difficult at the moment to ascertain whether South Africa is popular or unpopular amongst its African counterparts. If it is popular, it is also difficult to establish whether it is popular amongst all of them. Even though the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, in the words of Sinthumule (2000), tends not to see a link between South Africa's activities internationally and some of the issues on the periphery – for example, the soccer bid – the revelations made by South Africa thus far perhaps explain why Morocco did not side with South Africa during the World Cup soccer bid.⁷

Sinthumule points out that "the context, process and procedures of the UNSC are independent and worlds apart from the World Soccer bid" Co-operation prevails at the moment between African countries, but the issue of Security Council reform might strain their relations due to their differences of opinion. According to Hossny, "not only South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria are illegible

⁷ Interview with Mr Eddy Sinthumule – Assistant Director Department of Foreign Affairs- Multilateral Branch. 26 October 2000.

for a seat”⁸. This might be true, but the problem here is that if two permanent seats can be allocated for Africa, one country out of the three will have to be left out and no one at the moment is prepared to be left out. That is the reality no one wants to face.

4.3.1. How does South Africa’s position and its multilateral policy go together?

South Africa, as Landsberg (2000:76) points out, “is explicitly attempting to play a double-bridge role”⁹. Perhaps going multilateral has its limits. Perhaps it is important to highlight the disadvantages that go with multilateralism in a country’s foreign policy. The Mbeki administration, as Landsberg points out, “sees itself as a North-South and South-South bridge. It is seeking to cultivate ‘strategic partnership and alliances’ with countries like Brazil, USA, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, India and Germany” (Ibid).

Multilateralism is said to be the cornerstone of South Africa’s foreign policy. It is in the light of this that South Africa tends to believe in the democratisation of international relations and this “could be more readily obtained through a more representative and democratic Security Council. This should include the enlargement of the Security Council to meet the principles of more equitable geographical representation and transparency” (Mbeki, 1995c).

Whether multilateralism in South Africa’s foreign policy will lead to something good still remains to be seen. Perhaps there is more to gain than to lose. Perhaps it will not help to discourage multilateralism in South Africa’s

⁸ Interview with Mr. Yasser Morad Hossny - Counsellor - Deputy Chief of Mission. Egyptian Embassy .25 January 2001.

⁹ Double-bridge role - seeking to establish ties with countries in the North while at the same time establishing ties with countries in the South. This is reflected in the idea of the establishment of the G8 of the South to which South Africa subscribes. In this situation South Africa seeks to be a North-South and South-South bridge.

foreign policy from the outset. Time will tell as to whether it is advantageous to make multilateralism a cornerstone of foreign policy or not. Perhaps it is only fair to give policy-makers a chance to put their ideas into operation, then approve or disapprove later. But it is also fair to advise before the moves are made.

4.3.2. Multilateralism defined

Multilateralism is defined by different academics in different ways, but the common denominator among many of the definitions is their emphasis on co-operation between three or more states or actors. The concept of multilateralism is derived from the adjective multilateral. Multilateralism is defined by Nel *et al.* (2001:9) as follows:

An activity, outcome or institution involving co-operation between three or more actors (predominantly, but not exclusively, states)... As such it can entail acts of co-ordination of policies to achieve a commonly agreed – upon end (such as making sure that banks in three or more different countries follow similar rules of transactions), or multilateral collaboration where three or more governments pool resources to, say, put an expensive satellite into orbit. Multilateral diplomacy would therefore refer to the involvement of official state actors in the practices and institutions that facilitate co-operation between three or more states. It is often the sum total of such ‘involvement’ that authors have in mind when they write about ‘Multilateralism in India’s foreign policy’, for instance.

If multilateralism is truly a cornerstone of South Africa’s foreign policy, it will entail a lot of assignments for the state beyond its borders, since multilateralism demands participation in multilateral institutions and organisations.

4.3.3. The limits of multilateralism

Since going multilateral does not guarantee victory in the challenges that accompany the process at all times, this perhaps compels us to examine briefly the hiccups that go with making multilateralism a cornerstone of foreign policy. According to Nel *et al.* (2001:15) “... a state which is fully integrated into the international society of states, comes to represent and embody the norms that are reigning in that society at any specific given time. Such states, one can say, become the ‘conveyor belts’ of reigning international norms”. South

Africa is becoming fully integrated into the international community; the challenge now is to avoid being a conveyor belt for the reigning international norms.

Almost each and every action taken by states in the international system takes into consideration whether national interests will be affected in a negative way. If such an action has negative effects on national interests, it will either be avoided or postponed. Therefore as long as the main players still feel that this (Security Council reform) is in conflict with national interests, the process will always entail postponement.

Furthermore, if the proposals for reform do not fit into existing political realities, they will always be considered secondary by the permanent five; hence there is a need for a collective approach on the matter. This is also a challenge to South Africa as to whether its commitment to multilateralism will mean victory in all the challenges that go with the process. Perhaps we should not raise our hopes too much with regard to South Africa adopting a multilateral approach.

Failures will be recorded here and there, not only because South Africa may be incapable of dealing with the challenges internationally, but also because states are preoccupied with protecting their own interests. Landsberg (2000:77) succinctly advises South Africa on the matter when he says that:

... South Africa should not assume that countries from the developed North will act in its or Africa's interests when their own interests and bottom lines are at stake. They will protect their selfish interests when push comes to shove. Yet the northern industrialised powers will also render a sophisticated pro-Africa rhetoric that is not the same as the practices that they adopt in reality.

History has taught us that almost each and every undemocratic institution is dealt with successfully by collective approach. The UN is not a democratic institution and there is no guarantee that it will one day be democratic. Success in this situation will be ensured by a collective approach. Diverse

proposals have been tabled by different academics and states. Some propose permanent regional membership on the Security Council, whereby different countries take turns representing their part of the world. On the other hand, such a proposal is seen as unlikely to work since Britain and France are unlikely to surrender their status to another European representative.

The proposal that Germany or Japan be granted permanent membership is seen as leading to a perpetual marginalisation of the South¹⁰. It is seen as a strategy to concentrate power in the North¹¹. "It would be necessary to compensate by including a number of states from the 'South' especially larger regional powers like India, Brazil, Nigeria, and South Africa" (Kennedy and Russett, 1995:61).

This suggestion also put the above-mentioned countries of the South in a difficult position since they do not have regional support for such a position. It also in turn gives rise to a need to rally regional support. South Africa will at some stage need to speak openly against countries stifling the process if it is really to make substantial changes in the international system. In this situation it will risk being unpopular among the "big guys", something that is difficult to escape given the slow pace at which they respond to the international society's concerns.

South Africa has ties with Lesotho and other neighbouring states, but that is no guarantee that it will get support from them if it avails itself of the

¹⁰ The South – states in Africa, Asia and Latin America; the term is used to distinguish the said states from those of the developed North.

¹¹ The North – originally, the North referred to those industrialised states of Western Europe and North America that historically had embarked upon colonial and imperial missions to secure political and economic well-being. For more information on the two concepts see Alden, C. 1999:217-8. In *Power, Wealth and Global Order: An International Relations Textbook for Africa*. Nel, P & McGowan, P.J. (eds).

opportunity to obtain a seat in the Security Council. After the 1998 “invasion” of Lesotho by South Africa, it is difficult to conclude that Lesotho will always act in South Africa’s favour. There might (with regard to the “invasion”) have been miscalculations on both sides, but no one is prepared to accept the blame. Even though this is a matter that is subject to debate, a feeling of having lost their sovereignty for some time left many people in Lesotho disillusioned.

Zimbabwe is a member of the ‘coffee club’ and there were differences of opinion between her and South Africa over the SADC’s Organ on Politics Security and Defence. Even though the most recent differences have been addressed, there is no guarantee that Zimbabwe will always agree with South Africa in foreign policy matters. This situation has prevailed from the Mandela to the Mbeki era. If such issues (e.g. the invasion of Lesotho) are the building blocks of the whole multilateralism “package” then the limits will also be a challenge to deal with.

This perhaps confirms the movement of South Africa from pariah state to “just another country”, as reflected in what, according to Vale and Taylor (1999:630), “may be dubbed (despite denials to the contrary) the ‘British School’ of South Africa’s foreign policy”. This further confirms Vale and Taylor’s (1999:630) view that “...even when it comes to relations with its neighbours, South Africa is not exempted from the disputes and disagreements that bedevil all other states’ relations with their peers”.

Furthermore, South Africa has maintained its ties with countries antagonistic to the West, namely Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran. Whether this constitutes a commitment to multilateralism or not is the question to be answered by those in the frontline of foreign policy-making and implementation. This gives credence to Breytenbach’s (1997) thesis that, by maintaining ties with these

countries, contradictions are reflected in South Africa's foreign policy. He points out that:

... South Africa's friendship with Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran is fraught with contradictions, as its own foreign policy has a strong moralistic basis emphasising the promotion of human rights and democracy at a time when some or all of these countries fall short of the standards normally accepted in the West. The USA strongly disapproves of relations with these states, labelling some of them as "terror states" (Breytenbach, 1997:276).

This might perhaps limit South Africa's voice internationally as it will be seen as a representative of the "pariahs". Furthermore, if multilateralism entails maintaining ties with countries like Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran, this means South Africa is compromising its earlier position of pursuing a moralistic foreign policy. This confirms the earlier statement that South Africa's foreign policy must be at a crossroads. Perhaps Nel *et al.* (2001:6) are right to maintain that Mbeki's is an "ambitious programme" and those playing a major role in foreign policy formulation and implementation still face a challenge to come up with a coherent foreign policy.

4.3.4. Problems with South Africa's position

South Africa aligns itself with the OAU's position. Even though South Africa claims not to be preoccupied with getting a permanent seat on an enlarged United Nations Security Council, its participation in the proceedings leading to the reformed Security Council and the earlier pronouncement by Selebi (1998) are likely to make it difficult for African countries to believe South Africa's claim. The Foreign Affairs Department, in the words of Sinthumule, indicates that South Africa is focusing on "substantive matters of reform rather than on which delegations should become members of the Security Council".¹²

¹² Interview with Mr Eddy Sinthumule, Assistant Director, Department of Foreign Affairs - Multilateral Branch. 26 October 2000.

South Africa's relations with the United States of America are not completely sound given South Africa's perpetual relations with the USA's perceived enemies. There is a mixture of co-operation and tension between the two countries. "There are differences over relations with other states, including Libya and Cuba, and US policy in the Middle East" (Barber 1999:76). The problem here is that South Africa is an ally to the "bad guys"¹³ and it will be seen as pushing the agenda of these states if it takes a frontline in the process of reforming Security Council. The reform of the Security Council does not only have to do with the number of the permanent members and the non-permanent members. It also has to do with procedure, this includes the decision-making process; therefore the scope looks too broad than it appears at first glance.

Furthermore, domestic problems which need money to be addressed might make opposition parties and political scientists ask a question such as: why is South Africa channelling resources to missions outside the country which are unlikely to benefit the country in the near future? Perhaps South Africa wants a permanent seat in the reformed Security Council, but it would not be politically wise to announce its wish at the moment – hence the perpetual denials by the Director-General.

There are differences of opinion between the main opposition parties in the country on whether South Africa should go for a seat in the reformed Security Council or not. The Democratic Alliance, in the words of Eglin – its spokesperson on foreign affairs – "believes that it is premature for South Africa to go for a permanent slot in the reformed Security Council". Furthermore, the question of whether South Africa should go for a seat in the reformed Security Council if it becomes available has not yet been fully

¹³ In this case Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran.

debated by Parliament. The Democratic Alliance believes that “in due course should it become appropriate for South Africa to offer itself as a permanent member it will be essential that Parliament debate this matter fully”.¹⁴

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) also adopts the same position as the Democratic Alliance. On whether South Africa should go for a seat in the Security Council the PAC, in the words of its Secretary-General Thami Ka-Plaatjie, maintains that “South Africa is setting itself up for a failure if it is to go for one”. Plaatjie goes further to say that “South Africa is becoming too popular with the West than Africa therefore it must not be surprised if it does not get support from its African counterparts, our frame of reference is always the West”. The PAC, according to Plaatjie, believes “that the challenge that goes with being a permanent member is bigger, any country going for a permanent seat is just taking a risk therefore we are too sceptical on whether South Africa can handle such responsibilities”.¹⁵

Contrary to the views put forward by the Pan Africanist Congress and the Democratic Alliance, the Azanian People’s Organisation (Azapo) does favour the idea of going for a seat in the reformed Security Council if such a chance arises. Azapo believes that South Africa will be able to handle the responsibilities that go with being a permanent member of the Security Council. On whether the defence force is well trained to engage in peacekeeping missions, Azapo believes that it is important to give the South African Defence Force exposure. Azapo believes that, as the Defence Force’s

¹⁴ Communication (by electronic mail) with Mr Colin Eglin – Democratic Alliance’s spokesperson on foreign affairs. 12 February 2001.

¹⁵ Interview (by telephone) with Mr Thami Ka-Plaatjie, Secretary General of the Pan Africanist Congress. 08 February 2001.

top personnel have done their job thus far, “we should be able to cross the bridge when we are there”.¹⁶

Considering the fact that there has never been serious parliamentary debate on the matter, Azapo favours the idea of engaging civil society in debates on whether South Africa should go for a seat in the reformed Security Council or not. Contrary to the Pan Africanist Congress’ position that we have not yet gathered enough support from our African counterparts, Azapo believes that the assignments we are engaged in, especially in African countries, and the ties South Africans established with their African counterparts during the exile years, should raise no doubt on the question of support. In line with Azapo’s position, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) supports the idea of going for a seat in the reformed Security Council.

The UDM believes that South Africa has sufficient resources both in terms of finance and manpower to be able to handle the responsibilities that go with being a permanent member of the Security Council. This might be true, but still remains to be seen. Yet one becomes sceptical on the question of finance, since the government seems to fall short when it comes to service delivery in the underdeveloped parts of the country.

The question whether South Africa is becoming a conveyor belt for existing international norms or not is still on the minds of many academics and students of international relations. The UDM maintains that this is a possibility if South Africa is not careful, as the West tried to pressurise President Thabo Mbeki to take a stand against Mugabe on the recent Zimbabwe uprisings. The question as to whether South Africa has gathered enough support from its African counterparts thus far is a challenging one at

¹⁶ Interview (by telephone) with Mr. Mpotseng Kgokong, Secretary on Foreign Affairs, Azanian People’s Organisation (Azapo), 06 March 2001.

the moment. The United Democratic Movement is sceptical about support from a country like Zimbabwe. Lobbying is currently taking place and if ever South Africa happens not to have enough support at the moment, the situation is likely to change in the near future. If lobbying succeed, there are likely to be spin-offs in the whole setting.

Even though there has never been serious parliamentary debate on whether South Africa should avail itself for a seat in the reformed Security Council or not – the very debate which, according to the late Mr Alfred Nzo was necessary before South Africa could take a step – the UDM maintains that “South Africa will represent the whole of Africa if it get a seat and will speed up the process of re directing the Council to peace keeping missions in Africa. This will also help re-channel resources back to Africa instead of only channelling them to missions outside Africa, like in the Bosnia case”.¹⁷

From what has been outlined above, it is very clear that there are opposing positions on whether South Africa should avail itself for a seat in the reformed Security Council or not. Whether the PAC is being naive about South Africa’s capabilities or not still remains to be seen. Having served in the Government of National Unity for some time, Holomisa might know South Africa’s strengths and weaknesses better, hence his position that South Africa can make it in a permanent slot. If policy-makers in this country adhere to democratic principles, one cannot see a reason why the matter should not be debated in Parliament. This might be a step towards democratising foreign policy.

¹⁷ Interview (by telephone) with Major General Bantu Holomisa, Leader of the United Democratic Movement (UDM). 22 March 2001.

4.4. Other African States' positions on reform – Nigeria and Egypt

It is important to note that not only South Africa is engaged in the debate on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Egypt and Nigeria are also engaged in such debates; their participation in the Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council Reform reflect their concerns about the state of affairs in the Security Council. They, like South Africa, might perhaps be interested in getting a seat in the reformed Security Council, hence their need to reflect on their positions in this matter. It is also important to bear in mind that enlargement is only a component of reform as reform has to go beyond increasing the number of members.

4.4.1. Nigeria's position on the Security Council enlargement

Nigeria is one African country aspiring to get a seat in the reformed Security Council. Modibbo, Senior Counsellor - Political Matters in the Nigerian embassy, points out that "Government's position on Security Council is subject to change at any time in order to take into consideration new facts and realities"¹⁸. According to Hule, Nigeria's Foreign Minister Dubem Onyia maintains that "Africa's problems will only be properly addressed if the continent is accorded permanent seats in the UN Security Council... Onyia also explained that Nigeria's priority is not which country gets the seat but to ensure that the UN gives Africa the permanent seat in the council" (Hule, 1999).

Nigeria has not demonstrated any opposition to the OAU's position, therefore it is safe to conclude that it agrees with the set proposal. Field (1998: 24) maintains that Nigeria "... aspires to stand in the permanent category, but concurs with the proposal for a rotational seat system, as do other key African states like Tunisia, Kenya and Zimbabwe". Key African states claim not to be

¹⁸ Communication (by electronic mail) with Aminu Modibbo - Senior Counsellor - Political Matters - Nigerian Embassy. 08 December 2000.

preoccupied with getting a seat in the reformed Security Council. Perhaps there is likely to be a deadlock in the debate on who goes to represent Africa after the seat has been made available.

Even though Nigeria's foreign minister states that Nigeria is not keen to get a seat, Modibbo's gave a positive answer to a question whether Nigeria would like to have one seat if two seats can be allocated to Africa in the reformed Security Council. Modibbo further confirmed that Nigeria is ready to handle the challenges and responsibility that go with being a permanent member, for example, increased financial contribution and deployment of troops in peace-keeping and peace-enforcement missions. According to Modibbo, Nigeria "has always called for the equitable representation of the various continents", this perhaps informs its participation in the Open-Ended Working Group on the question of equitable representation on the Security Council.

4.4.2.1. Egypt's position on Security Council enlargement

The debate on the reform of the Security Council has put the relations among African countries especially Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa to the test. Egyptians maintain that the Security Council must be reformed. Even though Egypt is not very clear on whether it does want a permanent seat or not, it maintains that the criteria for a permanent seat must be discussed in the next OAU summit (July 2001) as many African countries and not only Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa are eligible for a permanent seat. Therefore there must be a collective approach to the matter.

It was stated earlier that there is a group of states called the "coffee club". This club is said to be against enlargement. The coffee club according to Hossny, Counsellor-Deputy Chief of Mission in the Egyptian embassy, "is not against

reform"¹⁹. The coffee club is against any "quick fix". A quick fix, according to Hossny, has to do with getting Germany and Japan on the Council and after that one country from Latin America, one from Asia and one from Africa as the permanent five would like it. In the case of Africa, Hossny reiterated Egypt's position that "there must be a collective approach on the matter as this is not supposed to be a zero sum game".

Egypt emphasises that it still stands by the OAU's position of getting five additional permanent members into the Council, with Africa getting two rotating seats. It further stands by the OAU's position of getting two seats for Africa in the additional non-permanent seats. Asked whether Egypt will be able to handle the responsibilities that go with being a permanent member, for example, increased financial contribution and the deployment of troops, Hossny indicated that "Egypt participated in a number of peace-keeping missions around the world and in Africa, therefore contributing troops is not a problem" (Ibid).

Hossny further pointed out "that Egypt participated in more than one peace keeping mission in Africa therefore a claim that Egypt is more aligned to the Arab states (Arab League) than its African counterparts does not hold water" (Ibid). Furthermore, Egypt is part of the Open-Ended Working Group on the question of equitable representation on the Security Council; therefore Egypt, according to Hossny, "does cherish the idea that the Security Council must be reformed" (Ibid). All in all Egypt still aligns itself with what was agreed upon in Harare (Zimbabwe) until the next OAU summit in Zambia, which might change Africa's position.

¹⁹ Interview with Mr. Yasser Morad Hossny - Counsellor - Deputy Chief of Mission - Egyptian embassy. 25 January 2001.

4.5. Possible outcomes

It is at the moment not easy to predict the likely outcomes. From the prevailing situation one can see that African countries will still encounter problems when it comes to deciding on who goes to represent Africa in the reformed Security Council. First, key African states – South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt – are all trying to convey a picture that a seat in the Security Council is not a priority. A debate on the matter is likely to reveal which country is desperate for a seat.

Secondly the criteria which are to be used on who goes for a seat on behalf of Africa are likely to take into consideration the military capacity and economic status of the country. Lastly, if military capacity and economic position are to be taken into consideration, most of the African countries will never get a chance, even in the next round, given their weak economic status. The OAU's position of two permanent seats might not change at the next summit. If the position remains the same and the debates on the reform of the Council lead to two seats for Africa, one out of the three will have to be left out and it is obvious that whoever is left out will be left dissatisfied. Furthermore, the criteria that are to be used to determine who goes there are likely to exclude other states for a very long time.

The likely criteria will be whether a country is prepared to increase its financial contribution to the United Nations and whether a country is prepared to engage its troops in peacekeeping missions anytime that a need arises. If the debate on the Security Council reform does not lead to misunderstandings between African countries now, it is likely to lead to difficulties eventually. Getting the Security Council reformed is a process and not just an event. There are those who try to speed up the process and those who are working day and night to delay or even stifle the process.

The process is characterised by procrastination and competition rather than co-operation between countries. Reform is not impossible; it just has opponents who want states to accept that it is impossible. Those who seek to promote narrow national ambitions stifle it. It is further postponed by a lack of consensus about the number of seats to be added. Furthermore, regional powers cannot act in unison due to the very rivalry prevalent between them. A resolution of the rivalry between regional powers will not only mean progress in the region, but will also mean something positive for states engaged in the process of getting the Council reformed.

The main players in the international system, such as the United States of America for example, are the main opponents in this process. They are the ones who wield economic and military power in the international system, hence their ability to stifle progress with ease. They are not really interested in getting the set up changed. The issue of national interests constantly arises in the process of getting the Security Council reformed. In the end the idea of striking a geographical balance is frustrated by the most “progressive” country in the world (ignoring the principle of sovereign equality of states), the United States of America.

The question as to whether those who are likely to assume permanent membership will be able to cope with the increased financial contribution that goes with being a permanent member is also relevant. Some countries, like South Africa, claimed they would be able to cope. Some need to be put to a test. Besides lack of co-operation by the veto-holding states when it comes to Security Council reform, the reform gives rise to challenges and responsibilities and some countries run the risk of not being able to handle such responsibilities.

There are a lot of responsibilities that go with being a permanent member. It is still debatable whether South Africa will be able to handle such responsibilities if it is to get a permanent seat, given the fact that it is still a developing country and still needs to address domestic development programmes. Below are some of the basic issues that South Africa will have to address immediately after getting a seat in the Council (if it is to get one).

First, there will be an immediate need for an increase (finance) in what South Africa is contributing to the UN at present. Secondly, full-time staff will have to be increased in New York. Thirdly, South Africa will have to engage in a continual process of contributing to the peace budget. Lastly, the country will have to commit troops for peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions. The fact that South Africa is still a developing country and the fact that there is stagnation most of the time in terms of economic growth raise some doubts as to whether South Africa can really make it; this still remains to be seen.

The obstacles in the whole process are also related to statesmen's perception of the negative impact that such a process will have at home if they are to compromise on the international platform, hence their inflexibility when it comes to giving others a chance to occupy the permanent seats. Furthermore the permanent members are against the proposed Security Council and South Africa as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement is supposed to play a major role in pushing them to agree to such a proposal. This is likely to make South Africa unpopular in UN circles.

Contrary to the prevalent proposal that Asia should get one permanent seat, Indonesia has argued for two permanent Asian seats in the event that Africa is allotted two permanent seats. The fact that China as an Asian country already holds a permanent seat makes it difficult for other countries to entertain

Indonesia's proposal. The process of the reform of the Security Council raises problems both in the "centre" and at the "periphery".

The central problems have to do with the attitudes and policies of the permanent members. Within the developing countries the question is: who is going there, given the antagonism between states in different regions? Potential permanent members in the Asian region have their own standpoints, which are not easy to reconcile. In Africa, South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt and others are said to be eligible for permanent seats.

Given the fact that the five permanent members are unlikely to initiate any significant changes in the structure of the Council, as reform will mean a dilution of their power, it is up to the developing countries to press for fundamental restructuring of the Council's composition. Developing countries have sought to redress the long-standing imbalance in geographical representation on the Council, but a detailed specific common strategy emanating from the South has not been forthcoming. If African states are to agree to rotate seats when they are made available, it will mean one less problem, since every country will have its chance. For now, it is not clear if there will be an agreement on such an idea. The rotational system seems not to be favoured by all key African states, but a consensus on the matter needs to be reached soon, given the urgency of the matter.

Should South Africa come up explicitly with its own position on the matter, this is likely to give rise to misunderstandings at continental level, thus reducing our impact and/or influence at international level. By proposing a change in the OAU's position, South Africa as Fabricius (1999) indicates, will run a risk of being seen by other countries as having a secret agenda to promote its own selfish interests, hence the opposition from most African countries. Therefore South Africa should calculate its moves very carefully

and avoid being seen as the self-proclaimed leader of Africa. This perhaps might harm its relations with several African countries. Its relations with a country like Nigeria “could cool if Pretoria pushes its own candidacy for a sole African seat (should this eventuate), given that Abuja has long regarded the African seat as its own” (Mills, 1999c:8).

Finally, the reasons why the Security Council tends to ignore Africa most of the time cannot be spelled out at the moment, but an understanding of the politics in the United Nations Organisation and the Security Council in particular makes one conclude that it is because the African continent is not well represented in the Security Council; especially in the permanent structures. This emphasises the need for unity among African countries on the matter for them to have an impact on, or make substantial changes to, the current composition of the Security Council.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper aimed to outline South Africa's position with regard to the reform of the United Nations Security Council. It outlined the challenges South Africa is faced with and is likely to face in its move to secure a seat in the reformed Security Council. It further outlined what South Africa should and should not do while negotiating a way to secure a seat in the Security Council. Even though South Africa never stated explicitly whether it wants a seat in the reformed Security Council or not, it does not take much to infer such a quest from the moves and the statements made by policy-makers thus far.

While South Africa's concerns about the state of affairs in the international system deserve attention, there are several questions that policy-makers need to ask themselves in pursuit of their objectives. Do states have common interests or not? If not, how does that affect their present and future relations? Does objectivity prevail over desires when states pursue their foreign policy objectives? Is the new international order shaped by the realities of global power or morality? A negative answer might be correct to some of the questions posed above, but this does not give South Africa a stronger platform to act in a revolutionary manner, since the world is relatively peaceful at the moment and what is needed is strong diplomacy.

A careful study of the present international order makes it difficult for one to confirm a claim that morality is central when it comes to the behaviour of states, hence perpetual questions on the issue of morality in South Africa's foreign policy. If maintaining ties with countries known to violate human rights is in the national interest, this implies that pursuing a moralistic foreign policy is in conflict with the national interest, which are the ends those in

control of the state are striving for. The question as to what has priority, moral issues or national interests, also needs to be addressed.

Conflicts of interests are endemic in the international system, hence the limited space for moral and ethical issues when states act. Since the pursuit of national interests is a normal and desirable practice, do we subordinate morality to national interests? If national interests are the primary ends, and maintaining ties with countries known to violate human rights is a means, then it becomes difficult to negate a view that it is politically correct but morally wrong to maintain ties with such countries.

The paper also looked at the positions of other countries on the reform of the Security Council. It revealed antagonistic positions on how the process of reform should be undertaken. The paper went further to highlight South Africa's foreign policy and the ambiguity as well as contradictions in this policy. It looked at multilateralism in South Africa's foreign policy as well as the limits of multilateralism in her foreign policy. It cautioned on the need to avoid being a "conveyer belt" of reigning international norms.

The contradictions outlined include, among others, pursuing a moralistic foreign policy while at the same time maintaining ties with countries that are known to violate human rights, like China for example. This is the very mistake that is discouraged by the United Nations at the moment, the very organization whose rules South Africa has pledged to observe. The positions of other countries such as Egypt and Nigeria as the main contenders in Africa have been outlined in this paper.

South Africa is faced with two options at the moment: to go for a seat in the reformed Security Council or not, given internal criticism that is already expressed by other players in domestic politics. South Africa is at the moment faced with the challenge of being a good representative of the Non-Aligned Movement in international dialogue. Besides all the challenges South Africa is likely to face, if it gets a seat in a reformed Security Council, one would recommend that South Africa should go for a seat in the reformed Security Council if such a chance arises. South Africa should not just seek a permanent seat for national pride. Participation in an international mission demands a lot both in terms of finance and manpower therefore engagement on missions that are likely to bring what is good for South Africa must be a priority.

South Africa should go for a seat in the Security Council only if it is sure it will be able to handle the responsibilities that go with being a permanent member. If South Africa is not sure about handling such responsibilities, it is recommended that it should not go for a seat in the reformed Security Council. South Africa is still a developing country experiencing low economic growth. Taking a seat means channelling resources to missions around the world (peace-keeping or peace-enforcing missions), the very resources that might be needed at home, hence the need for careful consideration of the matter.

It is recommended that if there are any doubts on South Africa's abilities to handle the permanent seat, South Africa should not take it, as this might cause embarrassment for the country if it fails to handle the responsibilities. This will also require that such responsibilities be passed to another African country; such a situation will be extremely embarrassing for South Africa. Accepting a seat in the United Nations Security Council might further delay

development within the country and people might end up rising against the state for paying too much attention to external affairs than internal affairs.

Nations are locked into a state of complex interdependence with the rest of the world, hence the need for South Africa to calculate its moves well and avoid misunderstandings with other states, especially its African counterparts, while negotiating its way to a seat in the United Nations Security Council. South Africa's acceptance of the seat will be a further reaffirmation of its commitment to multilateralism. This will mean increased participation in international organisations and the ability to influence decisions.

If South Africa does not accept a seat in the Security Council (should such an opportunity arise), its aim to influence decisions in international debates and perhaps making substantial changes in the international system will be delayed. The efforts it has made thus far will be meaningless and would have brought nothing fruitful for the country. South Africa is at the moment the largest economy in Africa and it contributes more money to the United Nations Organisation compared to its African counterparts, therefore if economic status is to be a criterion to get a seat in the reformed Security Council, South Africa stands a better chance. If South Africa rejects a seat in the reformed Security Council, questions might arise about how South Africa aims to achieve its aims and objectives of making substantial changes in the international system, if it does not want to play a frontline role when the opportunity arises.

There has been a lot of criticism about South Africa's ambitions and her diverse ends. Such criticisms will always be expressed, given the fact that not all actors in domestic politics can agree with the government's mission

abroad, no matter how noble the mission may be. Some of the criticisms only aim at scoring political points at home and not being objective, even in situations where objectivity seems to be the obvious route.

The debate on Security Council reform come ones after a very long time, if a country does not take a seat when given, it will have to wait for another round of negotiations after some years and such negotiations may not necessarily guarantee a seat. Such negotiations tend to consume time and resources. The disadvantage with participating in such negotiations is that the benefits are not always guaranteed.

Although challenges facing the states might be similar, their capabilities or ability to deal with such challenges differs; therefore South Africa shouldn't hope for a quick victory in every challenge. A search for international order might not necessarily supersede national interests, hence the reluctance among states when it comes to a demand to work for a particular international order or the common good. It is therefore worth repeating that South Africa should not hope for a quick victory in the forthcoming challenge(s). After the 1994 elections South Africa claimed to subscribe to the principles of democracy. It is important to keep a check on policy-makers to see how far they have gone in democratising foreign policy. Furthermore, the importance of democratising foreign policy should be further considered and, if there are benefits to such a democratisation, the question arises as to how far a state can go in democratising such a policy.

With regard to the Security Council, there should also be periodic reviews not only of the new permanent members of the Security Council, but of the structure and functioning of the Security Council as a whole. A review must be undertaken at least every 10 years. This will help to assess the achievements of the Security Council and give others an opportunity to

participate if the need arises. The General Assembly will have to play a major role in this process. This is the reality within which the business of the Security Council must be conducted. If statesmen ignore the suggestion above, their lack of foresight will result in the problems they are faced with at the moment revisit them in future.

If states are not prepared to be flexible on the question of reform, this might perhaps mark the possible demise of the United Nations Organisation. We have seen states violating the basic principles of the Charter. We have seen states violating international treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We have seen states violating the Comprehensive Nuclear test ban Treaty. Such states often go unpunished. The question that still confronts us is whether the United Nations will be able to address these problems of the international community.

It becomes difficult for one to give a positive answer to the question whether the United Nations will be able to address the problems of the international community given the nature of the international system and the tendency of states to push for narrow national interests. There might be differences of opinions on what led to the demise of the League of Nations, but lack of co-operation between states proved to be a primary reason. Therefore the United Nations is one important body that was created in the 20th century and its survival depends on the statesmen of today and those who will follow. It has had its failures and success, but that does not render it irrelevant at the moment.

The question now is how do statesmen save it from becoming another League of Nations? Perhaps it will be important to look into the weaknesses of the United Nations and make states aware of the possible danger of lack of co-operation in the Organisation. The United States under President George W.

Bush seems to ignore the Kyoto Protocol, the signing of which aimed to benefit not only the United States citizens in the long term but the whole world, including generations to come. Let narrow national interests not supersede the interests of all nations. One way to make the new world order truly democratic is to let all continents get equitable representation in the Security Council.

The Permanent Five claim that the Security Council is effective, but if that is the case, it means it is effective in a wrong way because in many of its actions it leaves few satisfied and many dissatisfied. The League of Nations failed and it was dissolved. We are not sure if the United Nations will survive for the next fifty years. It is important to conduct a study and point out the circumstances that can lead to dissolution of the United Nations. This will help statesmen to foresee the dangers of their less popular moves within the United Nations Organisation and this might help ensure the survival of the Organisation. This will help statesmen to see the benefits of compromise in international negotiations and not to hide behind national interest. Let states co-operate for the good of mankind; perhaps we could see a renovation if not a transformation of international relations and let the United Nations Organisation not perish like the League of Nations.

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